JUMP COMICS

1—④

NO.24

HUNTER

ハンター

冨樫義博

DIGITAL

DIGITAL COLORED COMICS

24

SHUEISHA

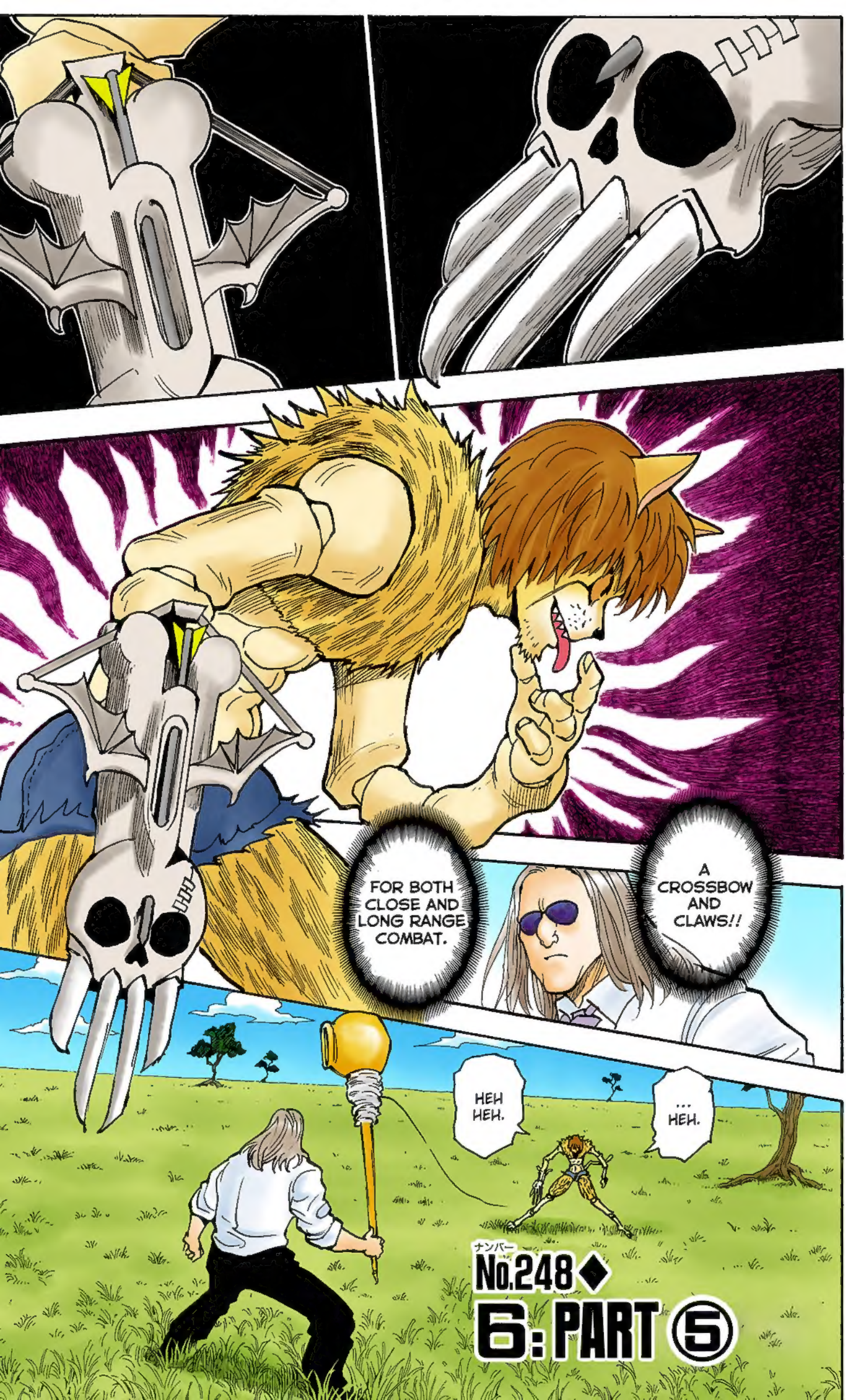
JUMP COMICS

HUNTER
ハンター

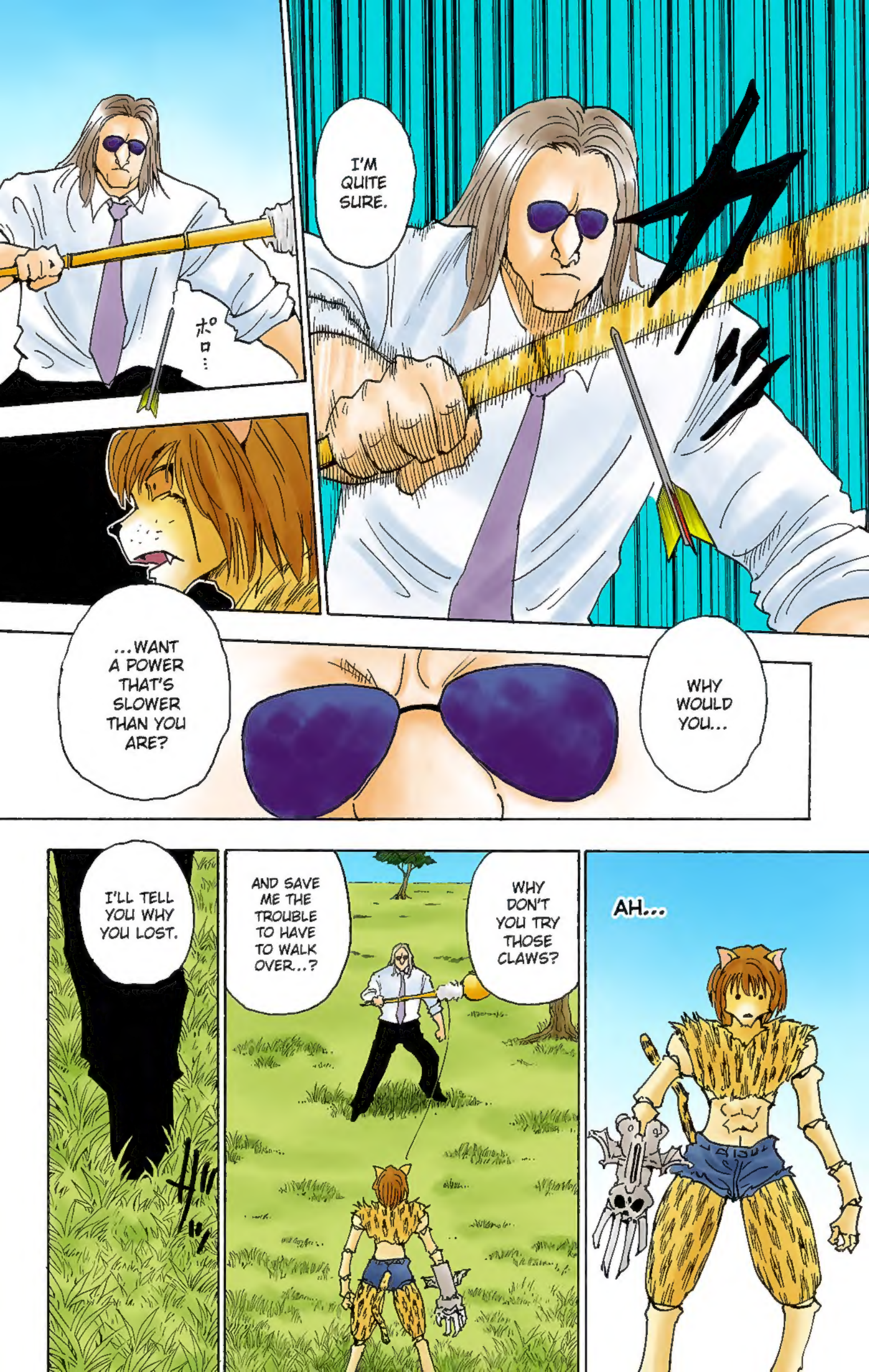
NO.24 1—④
ナンバー

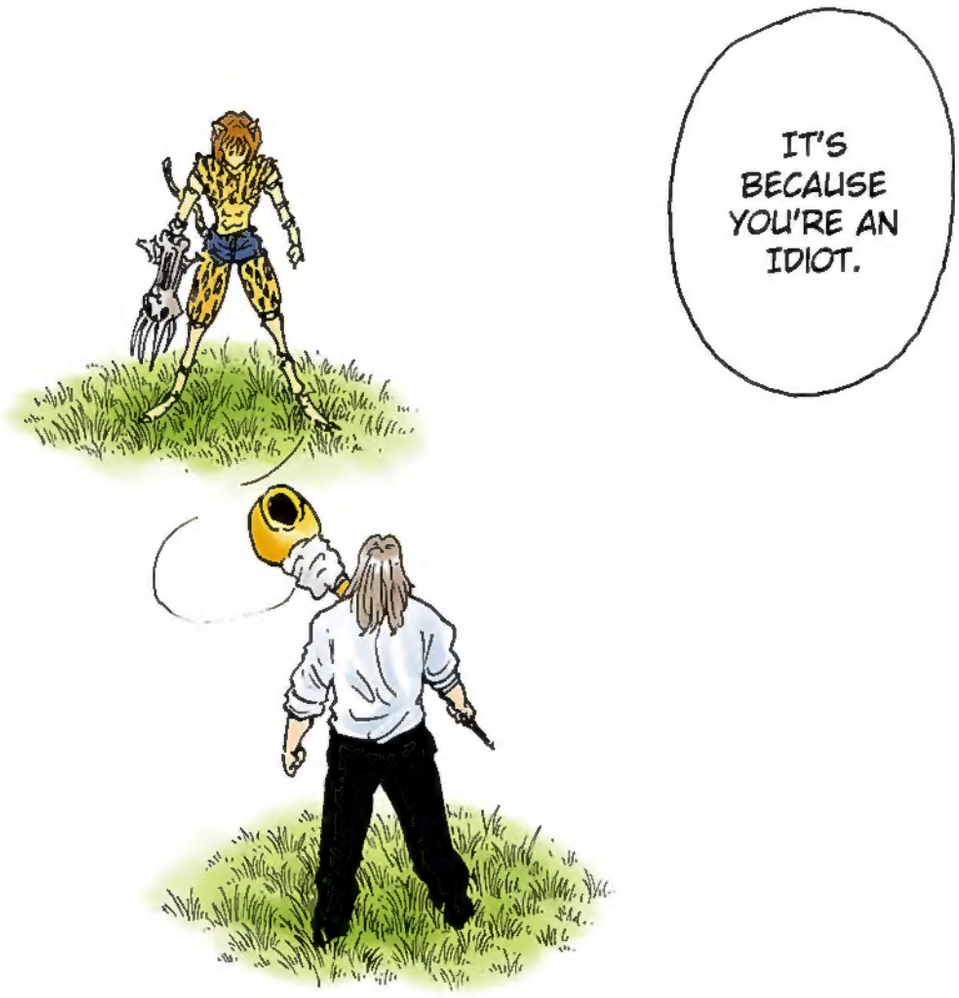
冨樫義博
とがしよしひろ

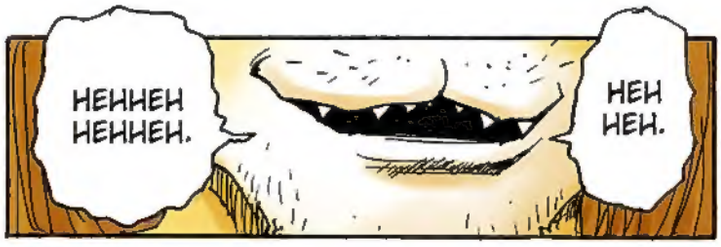
★This Work Is Based On The Author's Original Drawing In Addition To The Author's Color Orgininal Drawing This Is A Special Edition Version That Was Digitally Colored By Shueisha.

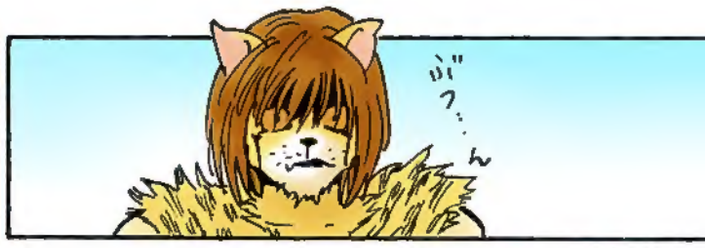

FOR BOTH CLOSE AND LONG RANGE COMBAT.
A CROSSBOW AND CLAWS!!
HEH HEH.
... HEH.
ナンバー
No.248
6: PART 5

YOU HELPED ME GAIN AN AWESOME NEW ABILITY!
HYAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA, THANKS!!
HEY, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
IT'S A BOW!! A BOW, SEE?
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO COME CLOSER?!

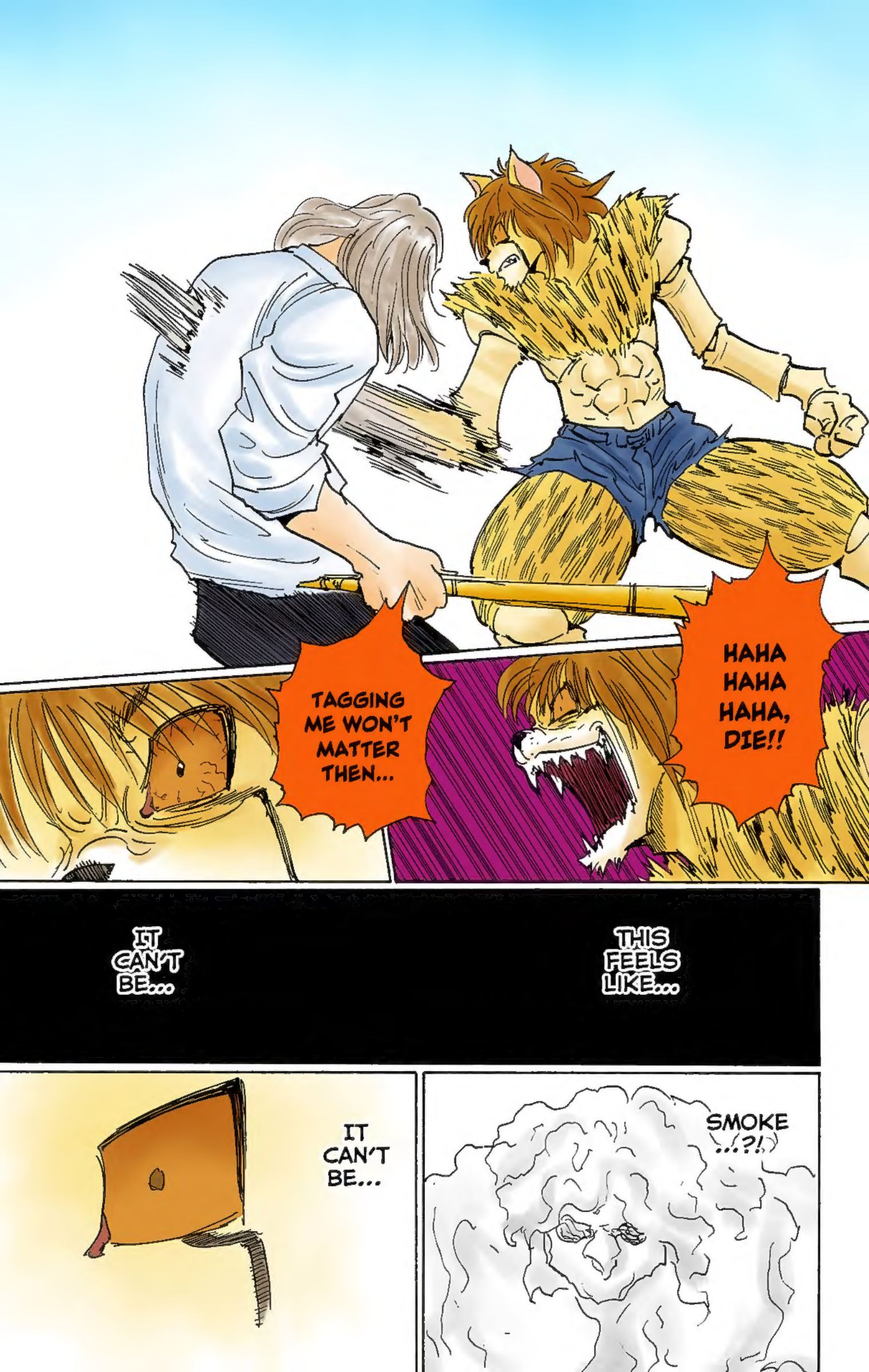

ポロ…
I'M QUITE SURE.
...WANT A POWER THAT'S SLOWER THAN YOU ARE?
WHY WOULD YOU...
I'LL TELL YOU WHY YOU LOST.
AND SAVE ME THE TROUBLE TO HAVE TO WALK OVER...?
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THOSE CLAWS?
AH...


IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE AN IDIOT.

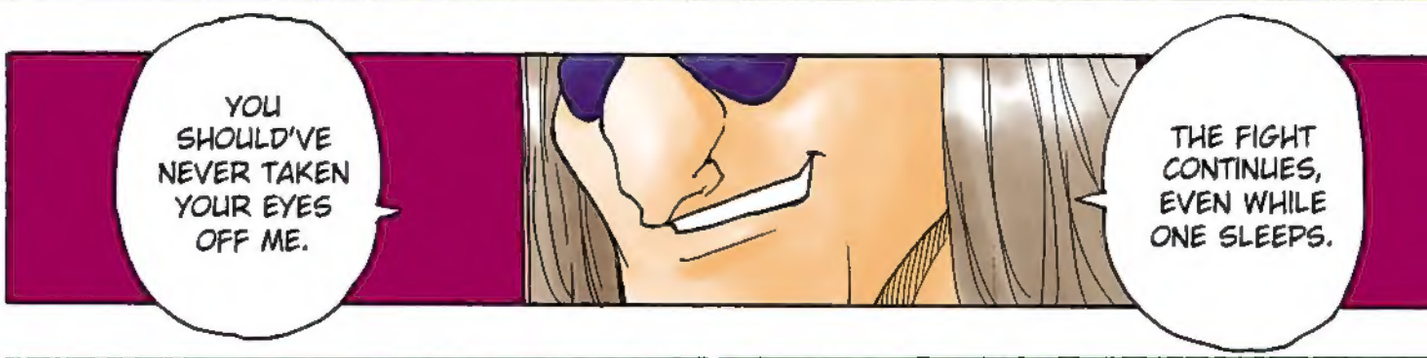

HEHHEH HEHHEH.
HEH HEH.

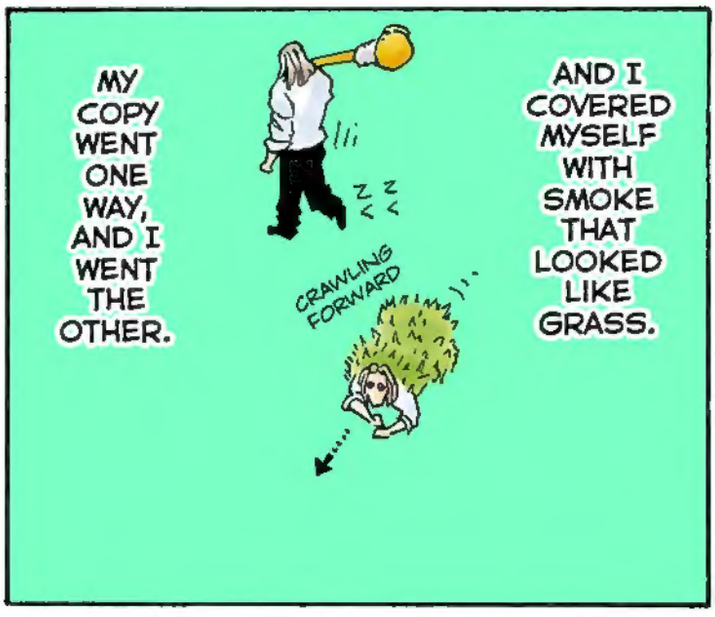


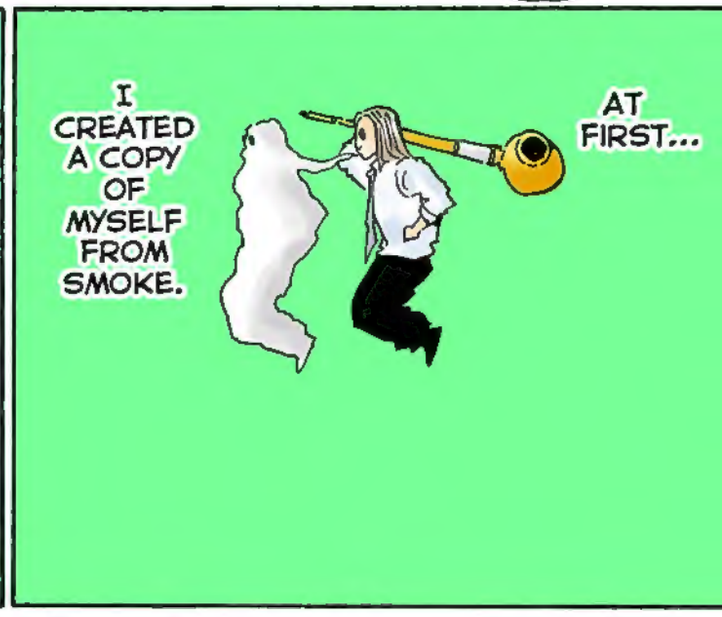
SHUT UP ...!!!

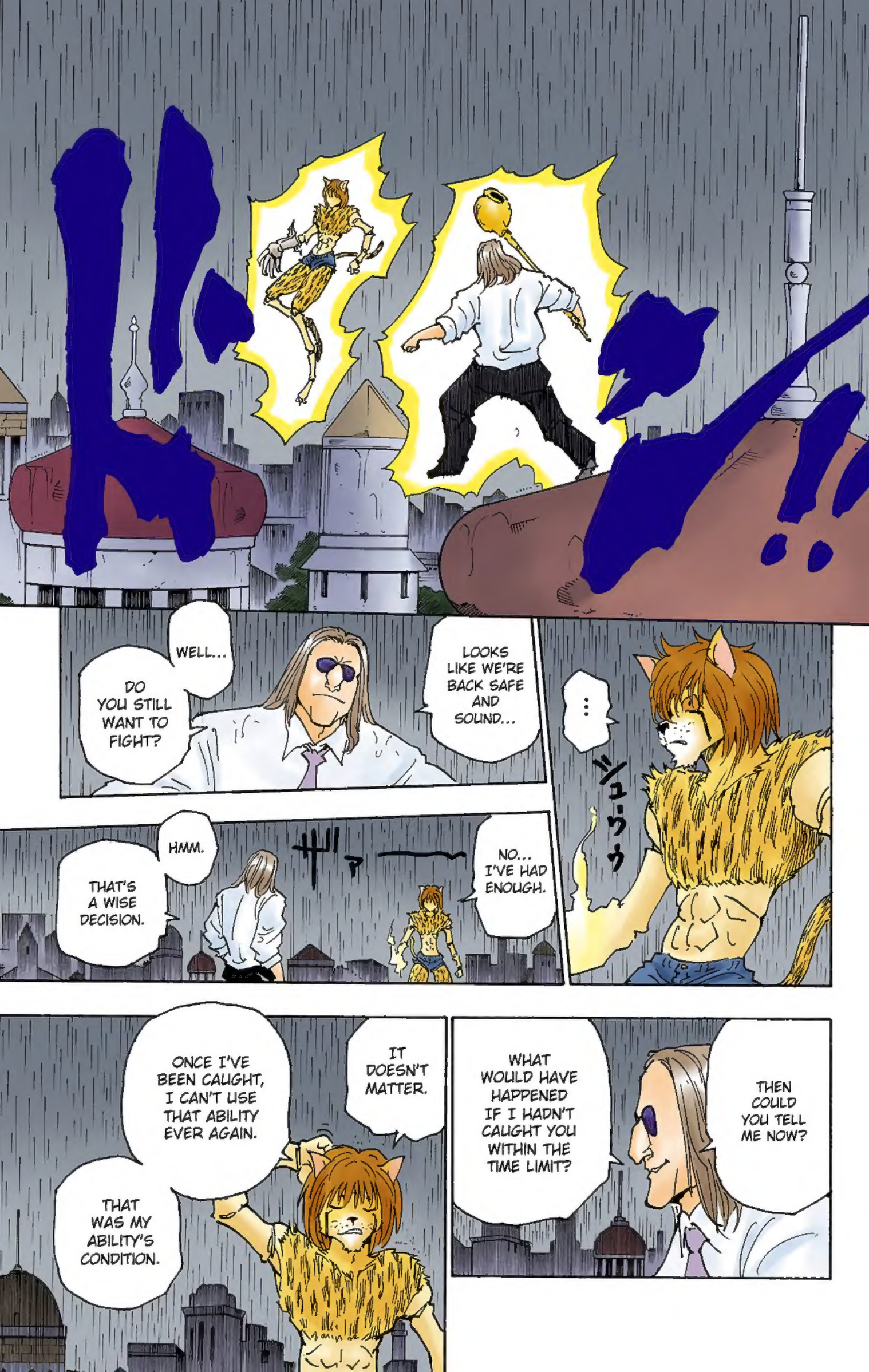

TAGGING ME WON'T MATTER THEN...
HAHA HAHA HAHA, DIE!!
IT CAN'T BE...
THIS FEELS LIKE...
IT CAN'T BE...
SMOKE ...(?!)

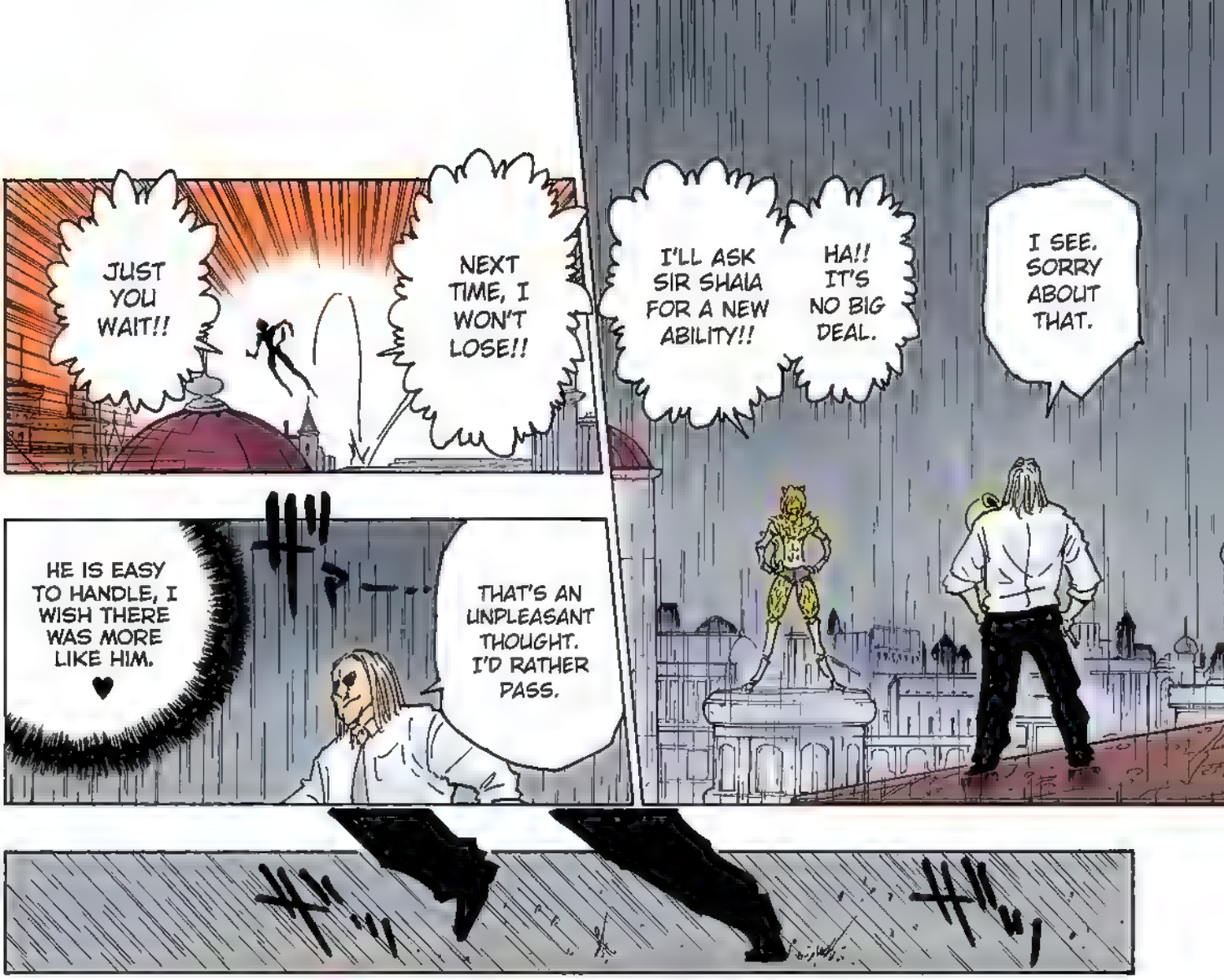
GOTCHA.

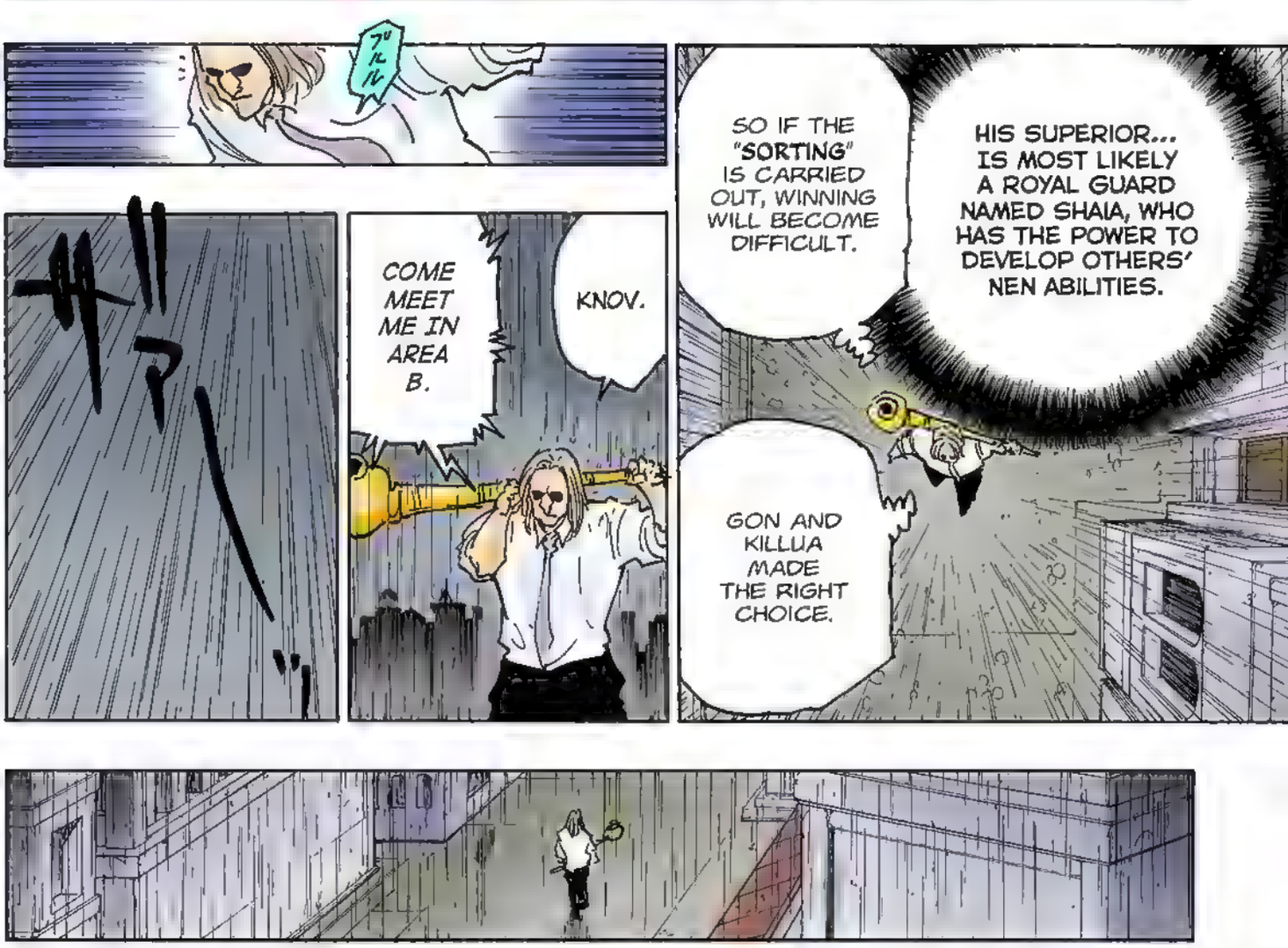

YOU SHOULD'VE NEVER TAKEN YOUR EYES OFF ME.
THE FIGHT CONTINUES, EVEN WHILE ONE SLEEPS.

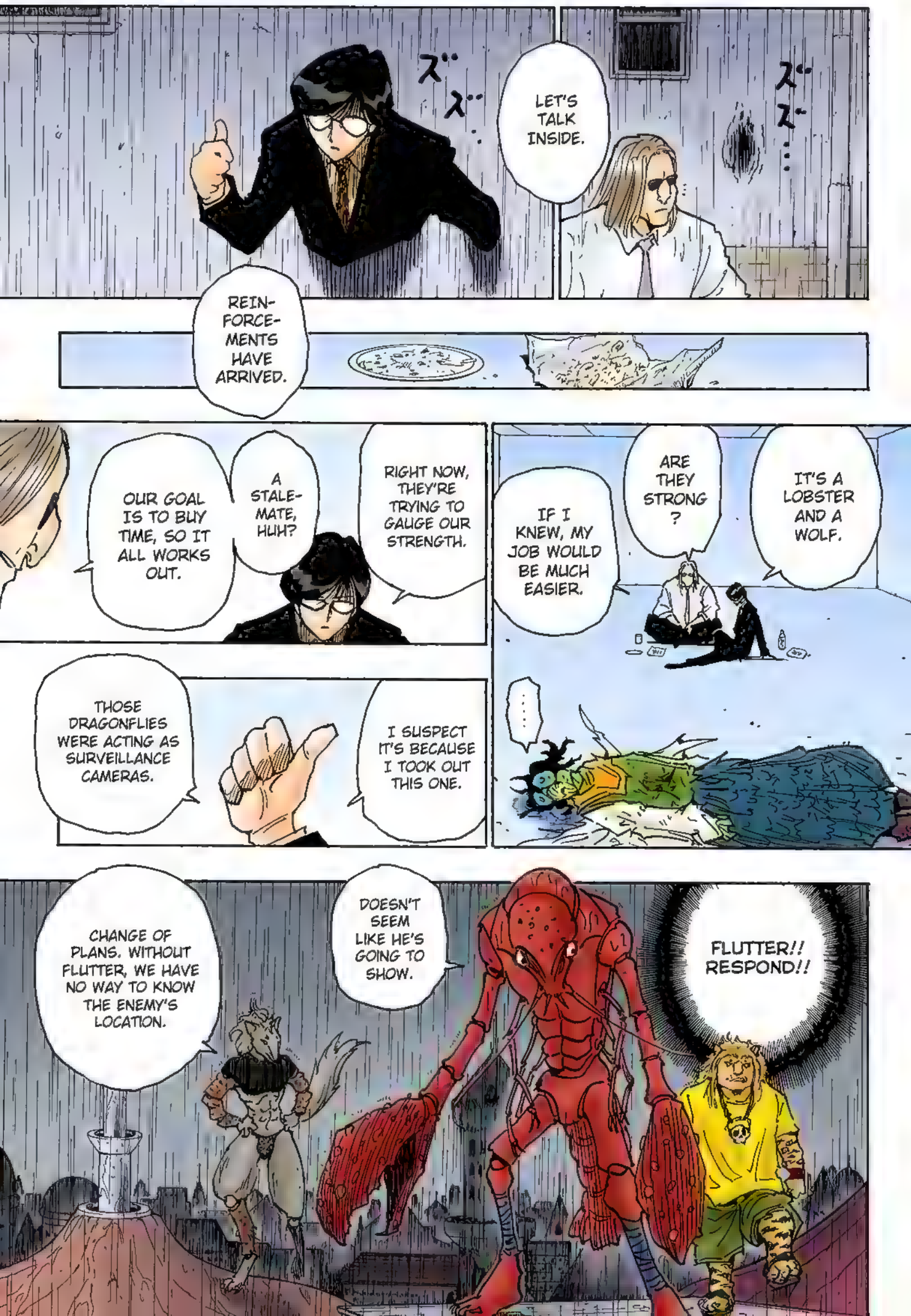

MY COPY WENT ONE WAY, AND I WENT THE OTHER.
CRAWLING FORWARD
AND I COVERED MYSELF WITH SMOKE THAT LOOKED LIKE GRASS.

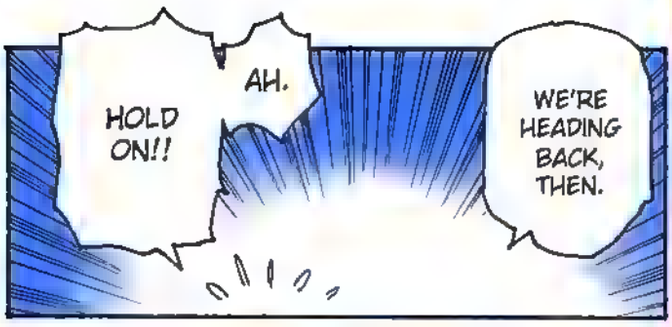

I CREATED A COPY OF MYSELF FROM SMOKE.
AT FIRST...


ドン!!
WELL...
DO YOU STILL WANT TO FIGHT?
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BACK SAFE AND SOUND...
...
ジュウウ
HMM.
THAT'S A WISE DECISION.
ザァー
NO... I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
ONCE I'VE BEEN CAUGHT, I CAN'T USE THAT ABILITY EVER AGAIN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THAT WAS MY ABILITY'S CONDITION.
WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T CAUGHT YOU WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT?
THEN COULD YOU TELL ME NOW?

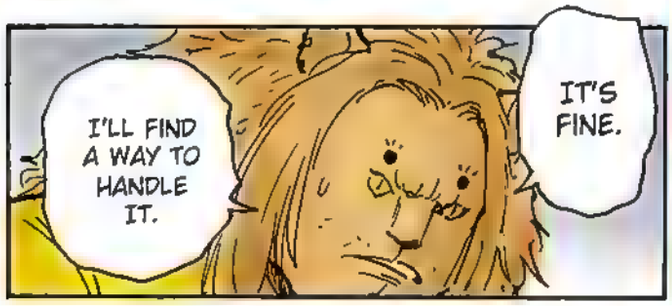

JUST YOU WAIT!!
NEXT TIME, I WON'T LOSE!!
I'LL ASK SIR SHAIA FOR A NEW ABILITY!!
HA!! IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
I SEE. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
HE IS EASY TO HANDLE, I WISH THERE WAS MORE LIKE HIM. ♥
THAT'S AN UNPLEASANT THOUGHT. I'D RATHER PASS.

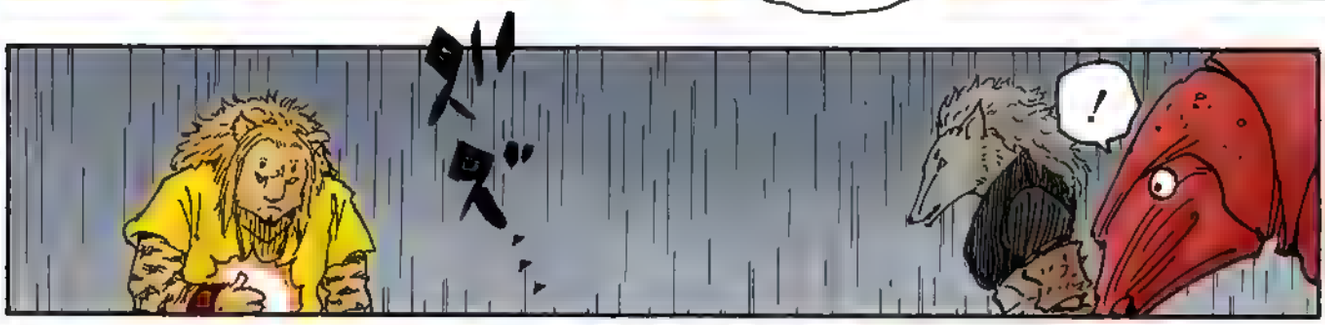

フルル
COME MEET ME IN AREA B.
KNOV.
SO IF THE "SORTING" IS CARRIED OUT, WINNING WILL BECOME DIFFICULT.
HIS SUPERIOR... IS MOST LIKELY A ROYAL GUARD NAMED SHAIA, WHO HAS THE POWER TO DEVELOP OTHERS' NEN ABILITIES.
GON AND KILLUA MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE.


ズズ
LET'S TALK INSIDE.
ズズ…
REIN-FORCE-MENTS HAVE ARRIVED.
OUR GOAL IS TO BUY TIME, SO IT ALL WORKS OUT.
A STALE-MATE, HUH?
RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE TRYING TO GAUGE OUR STRENGTH.
IF I KNEW, MY JOB WOULD BE MUCH EASIER.
ARE THEY STRONG ?
IT'S A LOBSTER AND A WOLF.
THOSE DRAGONFLIES WERE ACTING AS SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS.
I SUSPECT IT'S BECAUSE I TOOK OUT THIS ONE.
……
CHANGE OF PLANS. WITHOUT FLUTTER, WE HAVE NO WAY TO KNOW THE ENEMY'S LOCATION.
DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S GOING TO SHOW.
FLUTTER!! RESPOND!!


HOLD ON!!
AH.
WE'RE HEADING BACK, THEN.

HE LETS ME DOWN RIGHT WHEN I REALLY NEED HIM!! SHOULD I CALL IT OFF...?! NO, I CAN'T DO THAT!!
DAMN IT...
I CAN'T EVER LOSE FACE IN FRONT OF PITOU!!


I'LL FIND A WAY TO HANDLE IT.
IT'S FINE.


ダッ
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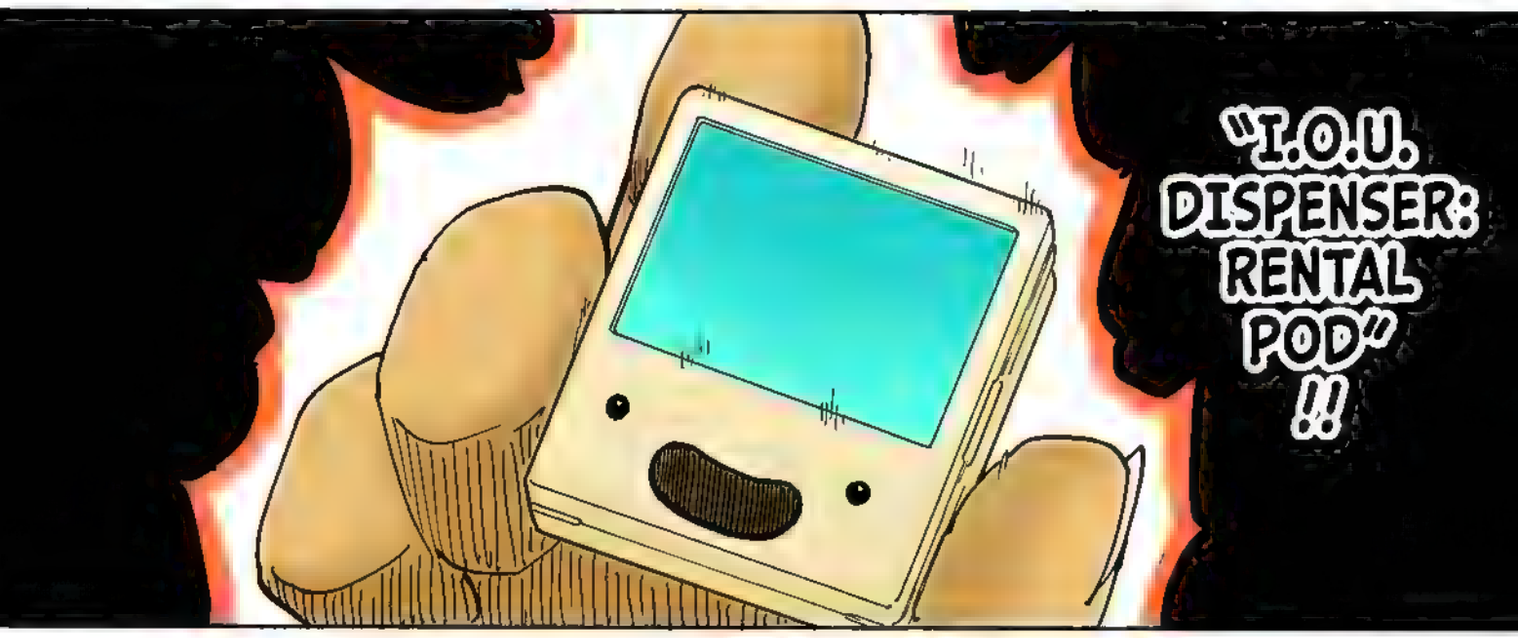
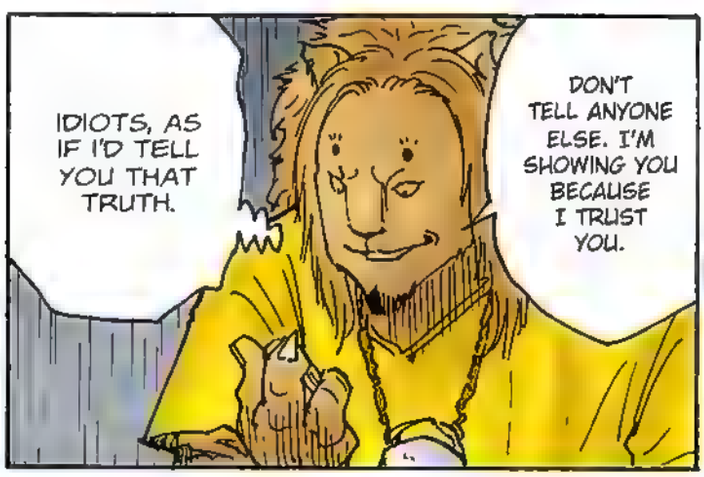
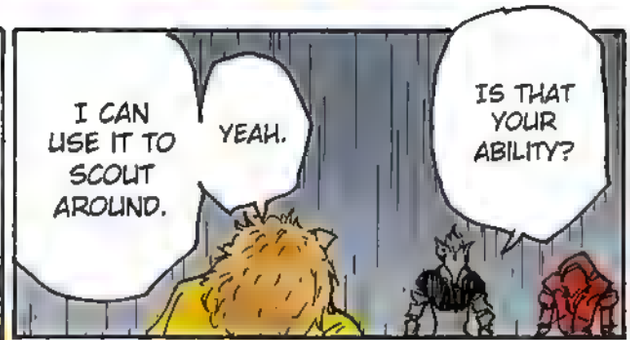
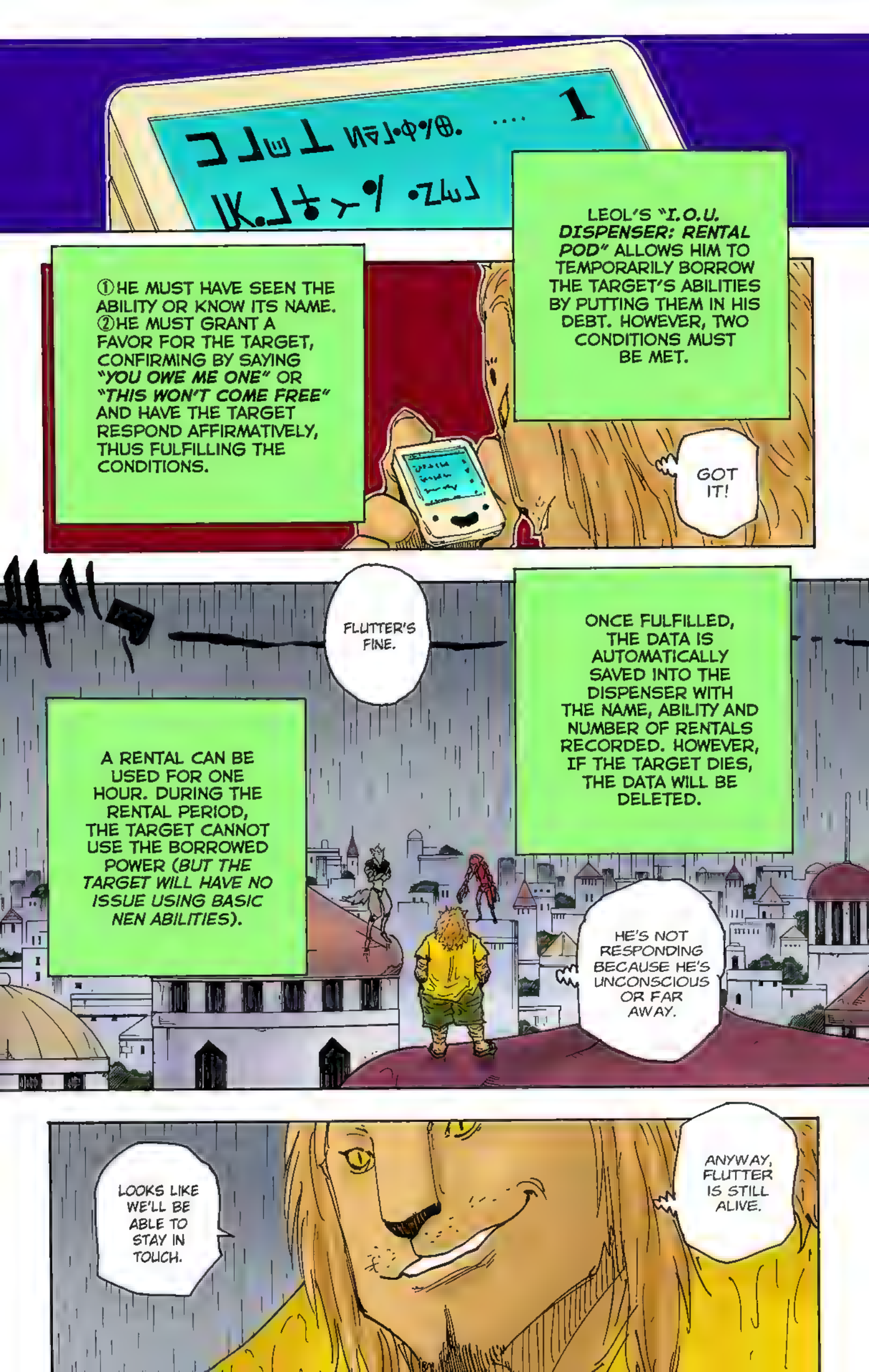
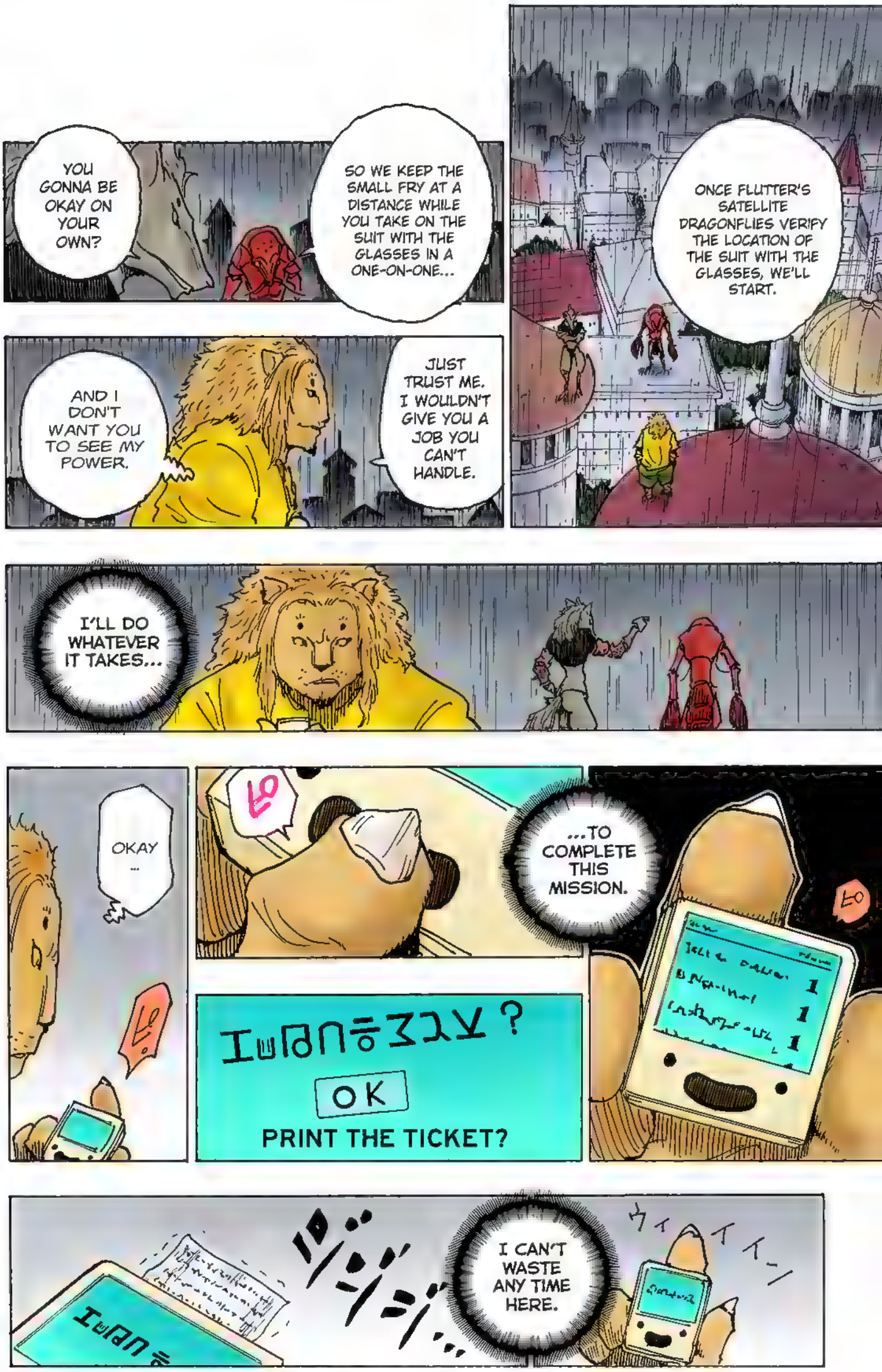
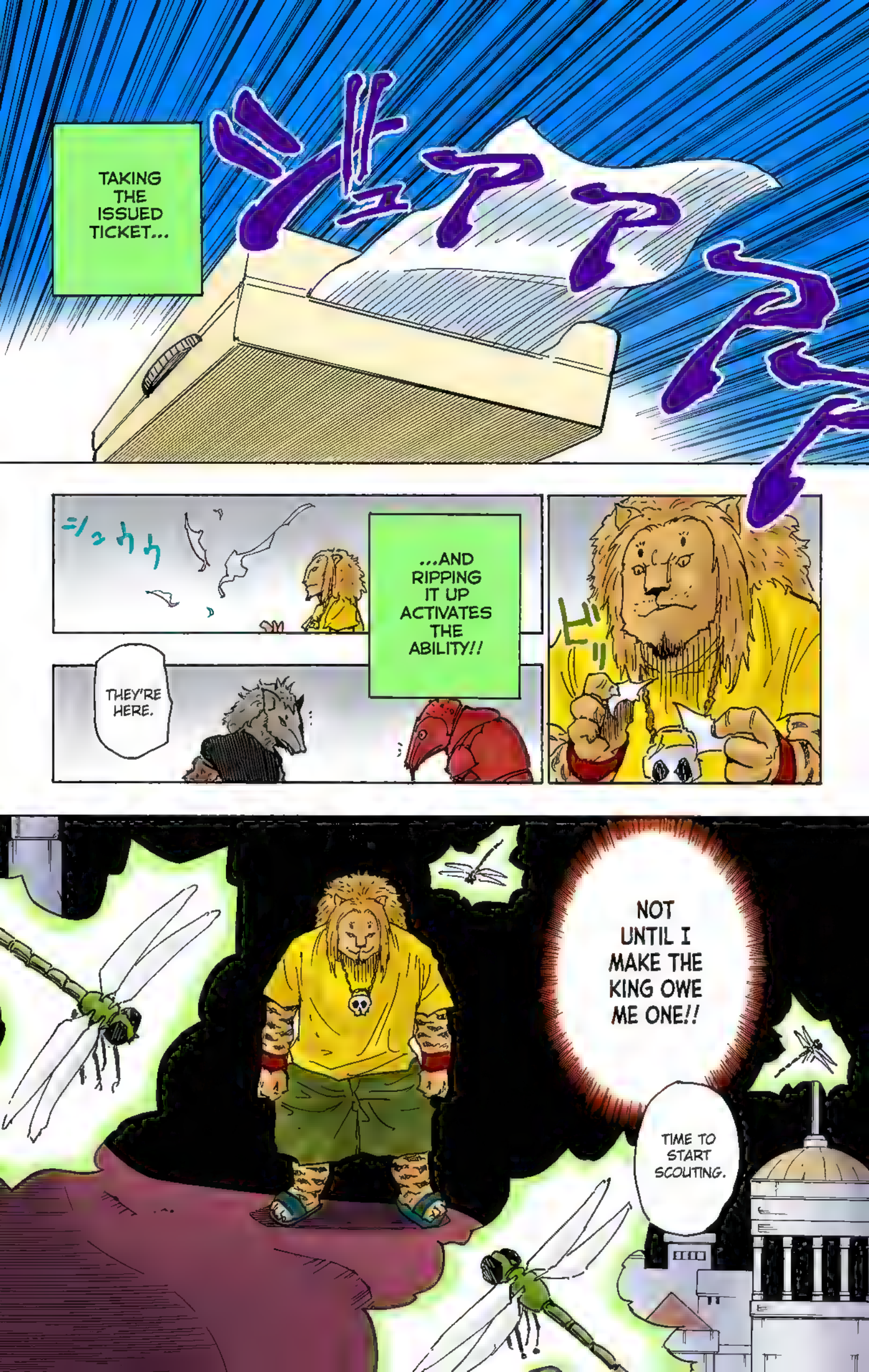

"I.O.U. DISPENSER: RENTAL POD" !!


IDIOTS, AS IF I'D TELL YOU THAT TRUTH.
DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE. I'M SHOWING YOU BECAUSE I TRUST YOU.


I CAN USE IT TO SCOUT AROUND.
YEAH.
IS THAT YOUR ABILITY?


LEOL'S "I.O.U. DISPENSER: RENTAL POD" ALLOWS HIM TO TEMPORARILY BORROW THE TARGET'S ABILITIES BY PUTTING THEM IN HIS DEBT. HOWEVER, TWO CONDITIONS MUST BE MET.
①HE MUST HAVE SEEN THE ABILITY OR KNOW ITS NAME. ②HE MUST GRANT A FAVOR FOR THE TARGET, CONFIRMING BY SAYING "YOU OWE ME ONE" OR "THIS WON'T COME FREE" AND HAVE THE TARGET RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY, THUS FULFILLING THE CONDITIONS.
GOT IT!
FLUTTER'S FINE.
ONCE FULFILLED, THE DATA IS AUTOMATICALLY SAVED INTO THE DISPENSER WITH THE NAME, ABILITY AND NUMBER OF RENTALS RECORDED. HOWEVER, IF THE TARGET DIES, THE DATA WILL BE DELETED.
A RENTAL CAN BE USED FOR ONE HOUR. DURING THE RENTAL PERIOD, THE TARGET CANNOT USE THE BORROWED POWER (BUT THE TARGET WILL HAVE NO ISSUE USING BASIC NEN ABILITIES).
HE'S NOT RESPONDING BECAUSE HE'S UNCONSCIOUS OR FAR AWAY.
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE ABLE TO STAY IN TOUCH.
ANYWAY, FLUTTER IS STILL ALIVE.


YOU GONNA BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN?
SO WE KEEP THE SMALL FRY AT A DISTANCE WHILE YOU TAKE ON THE SUIT WITH THE GLASSES IN A ONE-ON-ONE...
ONCE FLUTTER'S SATELLITE DRAGONFLIES VERIFY THE LOCATION OF THE SUIT WITH THE GLASSES, WE'LL START.
AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE MY POWER.
JUST TRUST ME. I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU A JOB YOU CAN'T HANDLE.
I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES...
OKAY ...
...TO COMPLETE THIS MISSION.
OK
PRINT THE TICKET?
I CAN'T WASTE ANY TIME HERE.


TAKING THE ISSUED TICKET...
...AND RIPPING IT UP ACTIVATES THE ABILITY!!
THEY'RE HERE.
NOT UNTIL I MAKE THE KING OWE ME ONE!!
TIME TO START SCOUTING.

DURING OUR MATCHES, MY RHYTHM IS THE ONE BEING DISRUPTED.

IT SHOULD BE AN UNBEARABLE INDIGNITY!!

AND YET...

THIS IS UPSETTING.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

THE SOURCE OF THIS FEELING...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY...

...I ENJOY IT AT THE SAME TIME...!

WHILE I FIND MYSELF FRUSTRATED...

I FIND IT EXTREMELY VEXING...!!

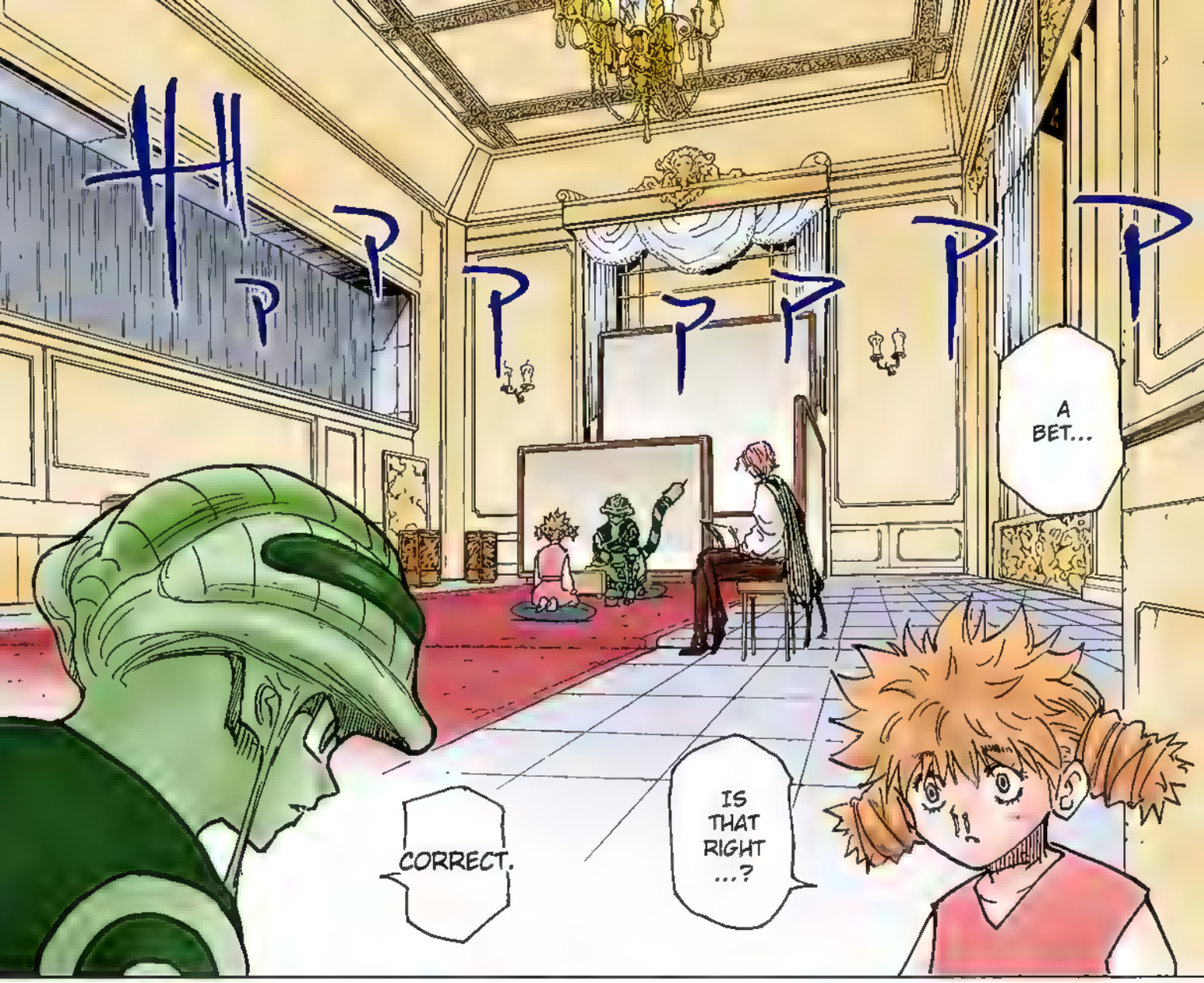
WELL ...

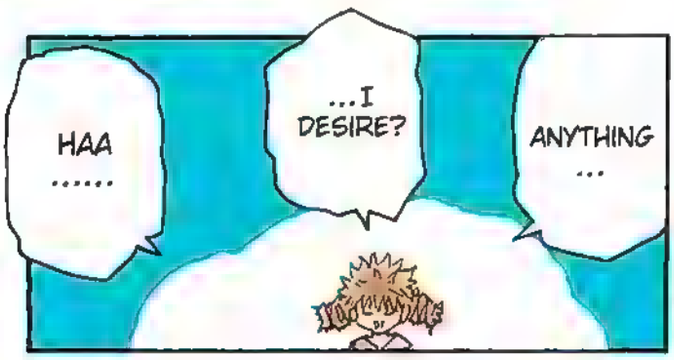
DID SHE NOT CHOOSE TO REST?

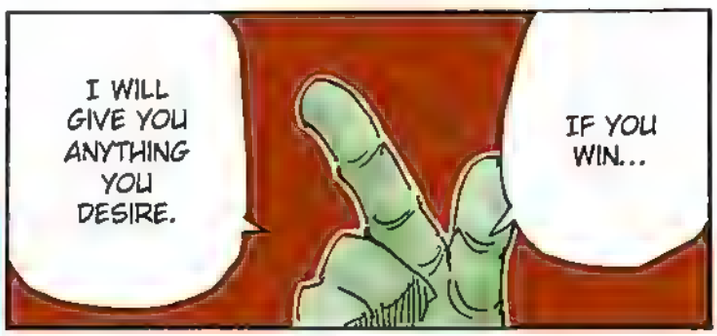
!?

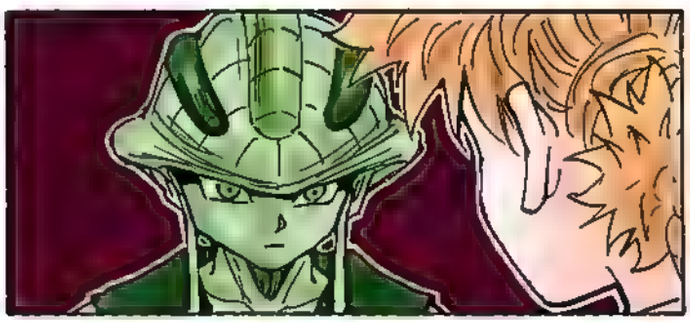
MY SKILL IN SELF-ANALYSIS IS NOT YET REFINED.

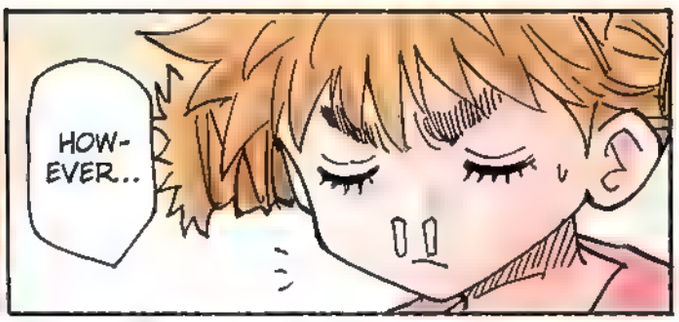
HOW VILE...
NO SIGN OF INTELLIGENCE OR DIGNITY.
...FLOW THOSE BEAUTIFUL PLAYS, THOSE PARAGONS OF LOGIC LIKE WATER FROM A FOUNTAIN...?!
HOW IS IT THAT SOMEONE LIKE HER...
.....
Y-YES!!
MHH-HUH?!
TIME TO BEGIN.
WAKE UP!
KING 9-5-1.
FOR THIS MATCH ...
SHOULD WE...
...BET SOMETHING ON IT?









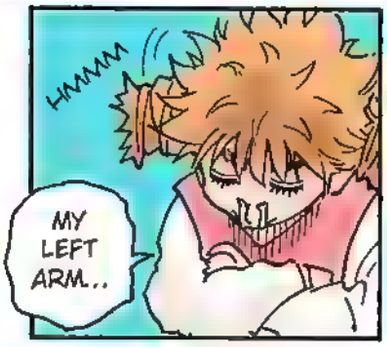


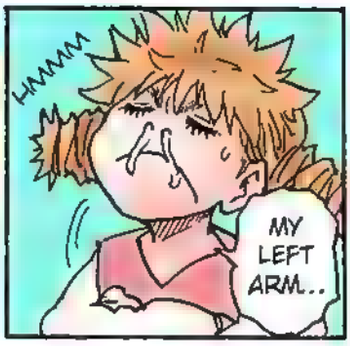
No.249 ◆ 6: PART ⑥

ナンバー

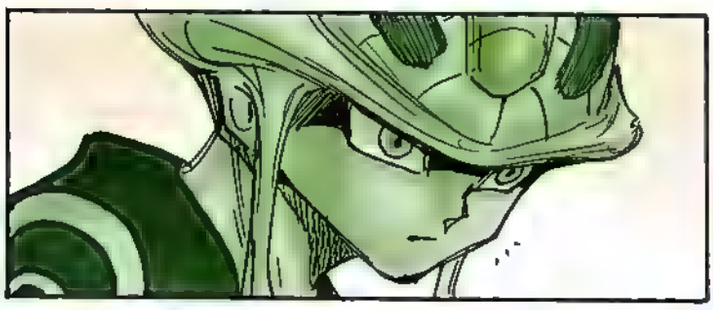
IF YOU LOSE...
...I SHALL TAKE YOUR LEFT ARM.

...IS GREED AND FEAR.
THE THINGS THAT DISRUPT THE HUMAN RHYTHM...


HMMMM
MY LEFT ARM..


HMMMM
MY LEFT ARM..

GREED WILL CLOUD THE EYES AND FEAR WILL SHRINK HER COURAGE.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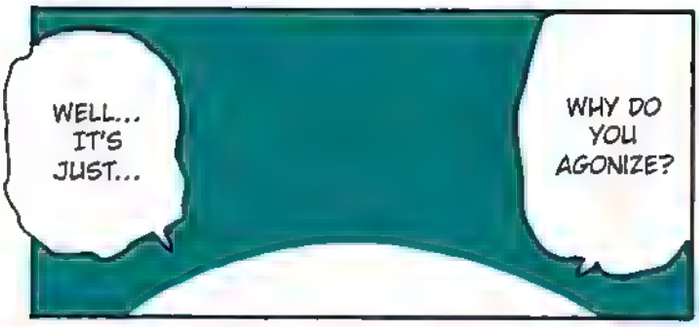
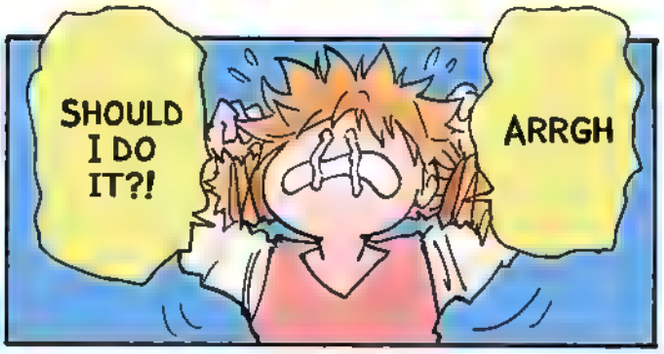
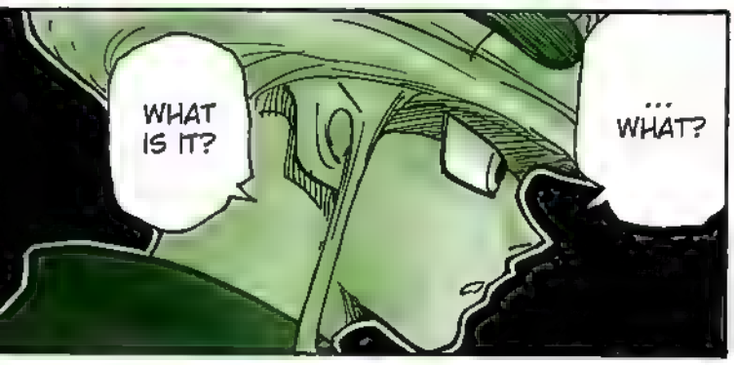
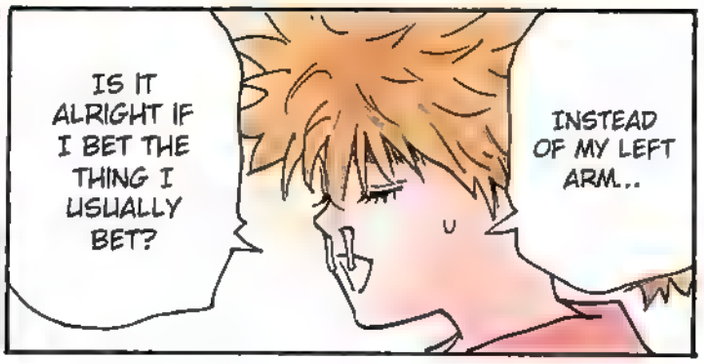

WELL... IT'S JUST...
WHY DO YOU AGONIZE?


SHOULD I DO IT?!
ARRGH


WHAT IS IT?
... WHAT?


IS IT ALRIGHT IF I BET THE THING I USUALLY BET?
INSTEAD OF MY LEFT ARM..

MY LIFE.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO OFFEND YOU.

ボボボリリ

IF I LOSE, I'D LIKE TO OFFER UP MY LIFE.

EXPLAIN YOURSELF.

I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

IN OTHER WORDS, GUNGI IS THE ONLY REASON I'M ALIVE.

WELL, GUNGI IS REALLY THE ONLY THING I CAN DO.

UM...

MEANING, YOU CAN'T LOSE A SINGLE MATCH.

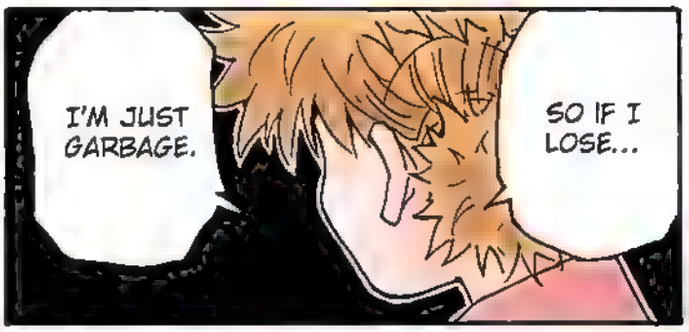
TO BECOME THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, YOU MUST WIN MANY TOURNAMENTS.

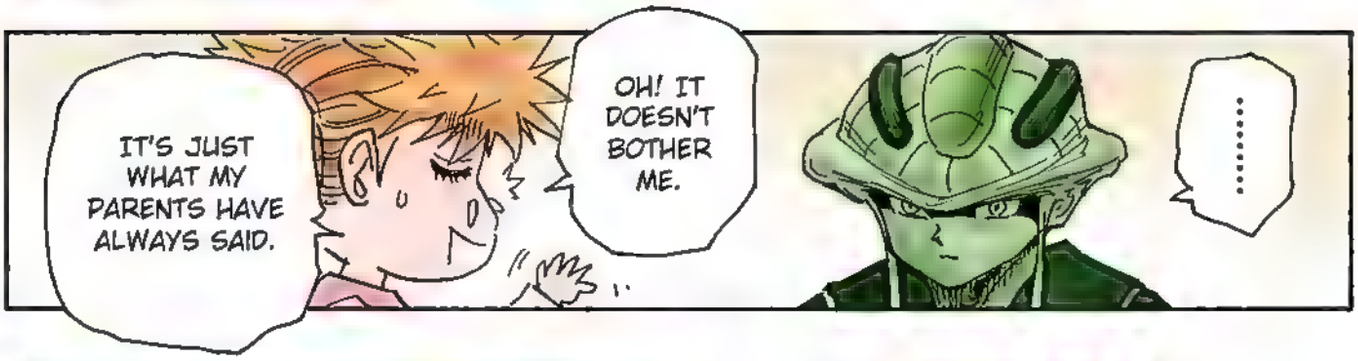
ONLY AFTER YOU BECOME THE WORLD CHAMPION AS REPRESENTATIVE FOR A NATION WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY MEANINGFUL REWARD.

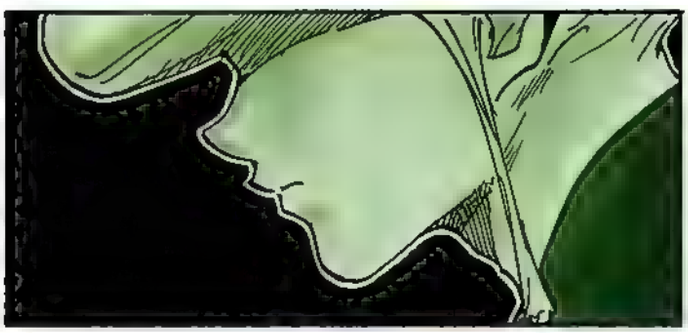
BUT EVEN PROFESSIONAL GUNGI PLAYERS, EVEN NATIONAL CHAMPIONS, MAKE A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY.

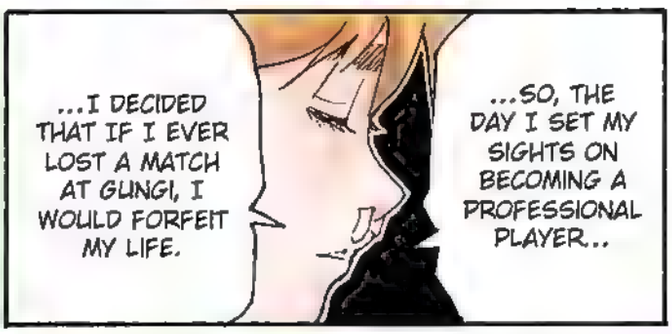
I COME FROM A FAMILY OF TWELVE, AND IN OUR HOME, I'M THE BREADWINNER.

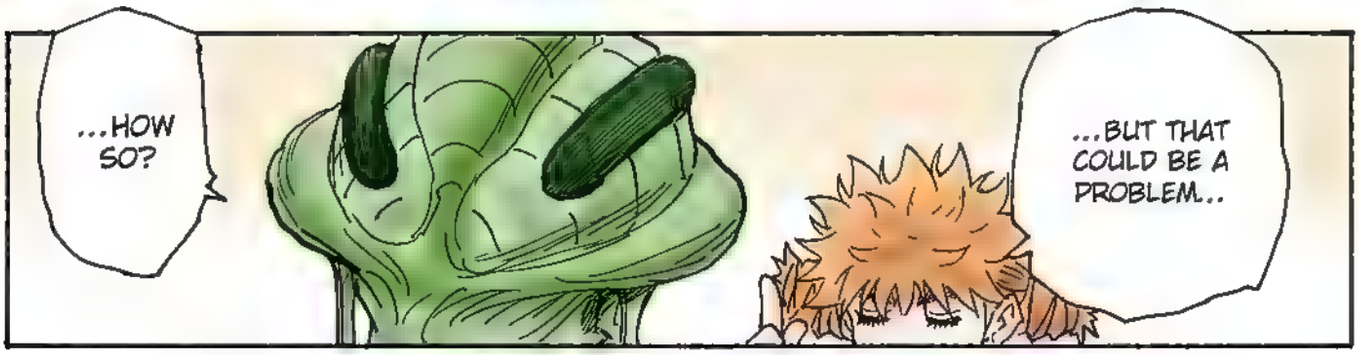
IF I LOSE A SINGLE MATCH, I WILL BECOME THE GREATEST BURDEN ON MY FAMILY.

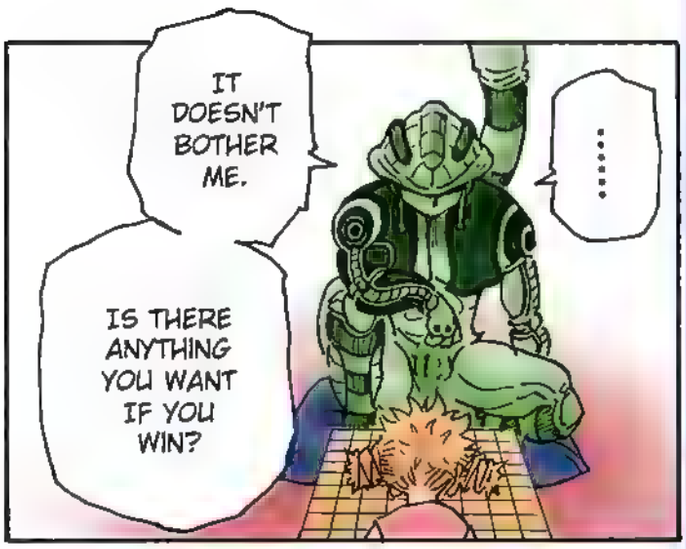


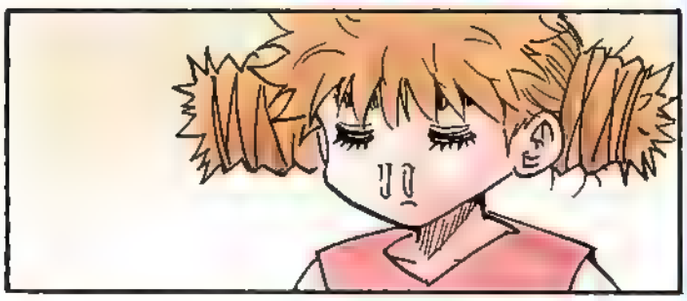


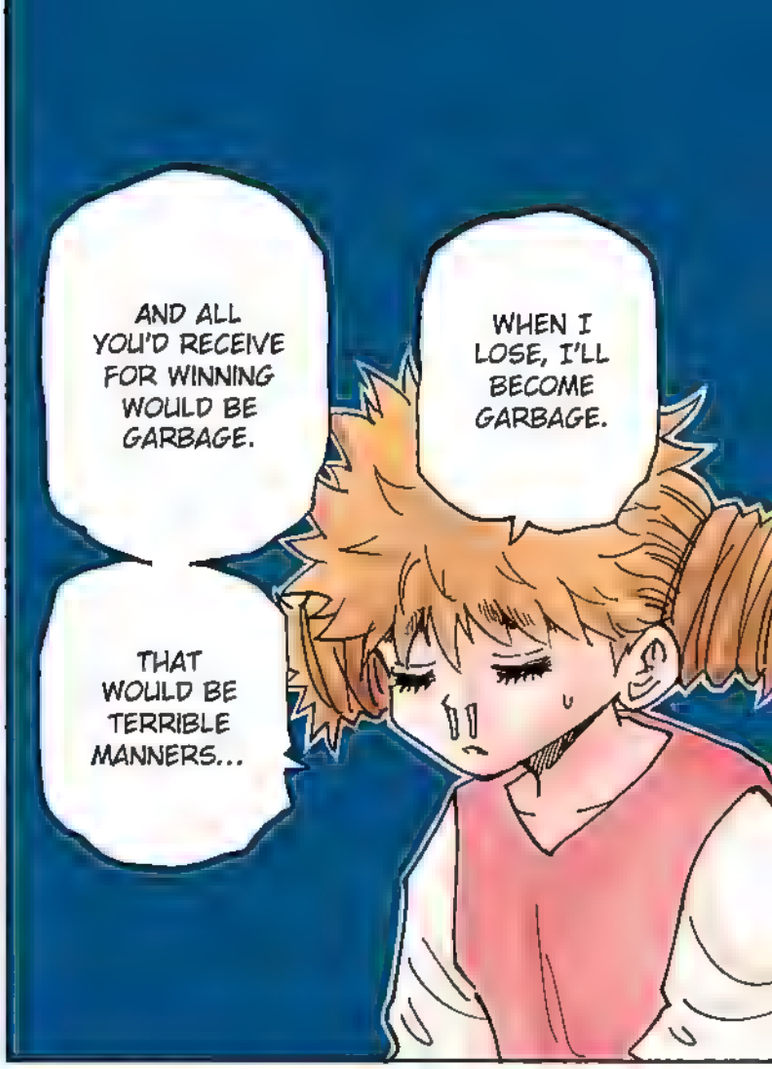


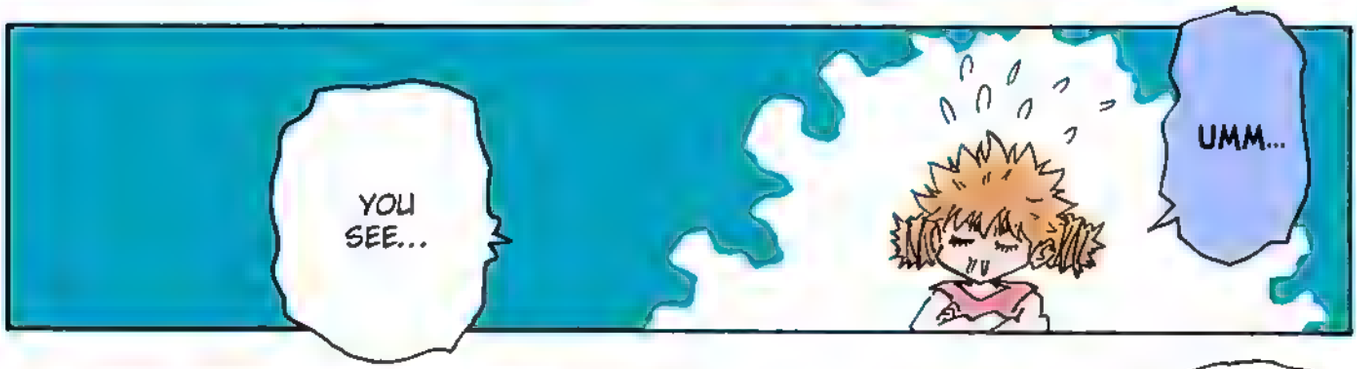


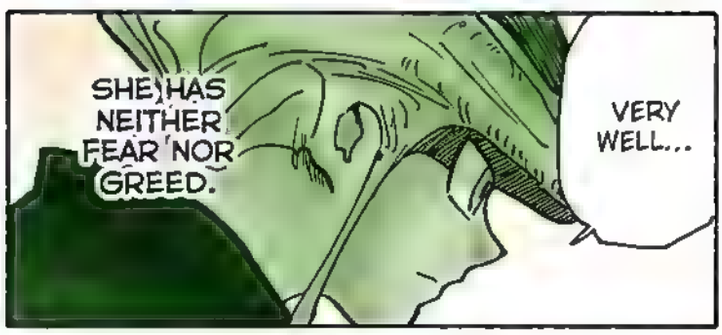


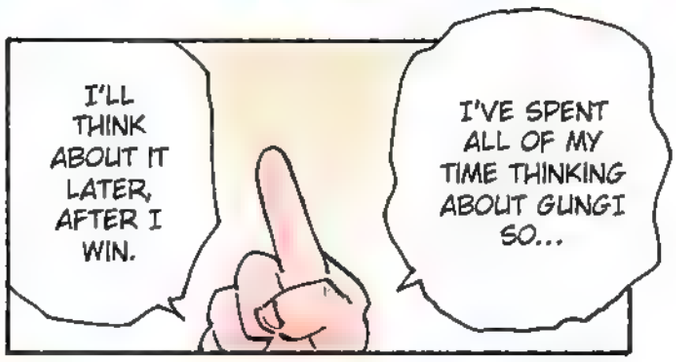

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT IF YOU WIN?
IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME.
.....

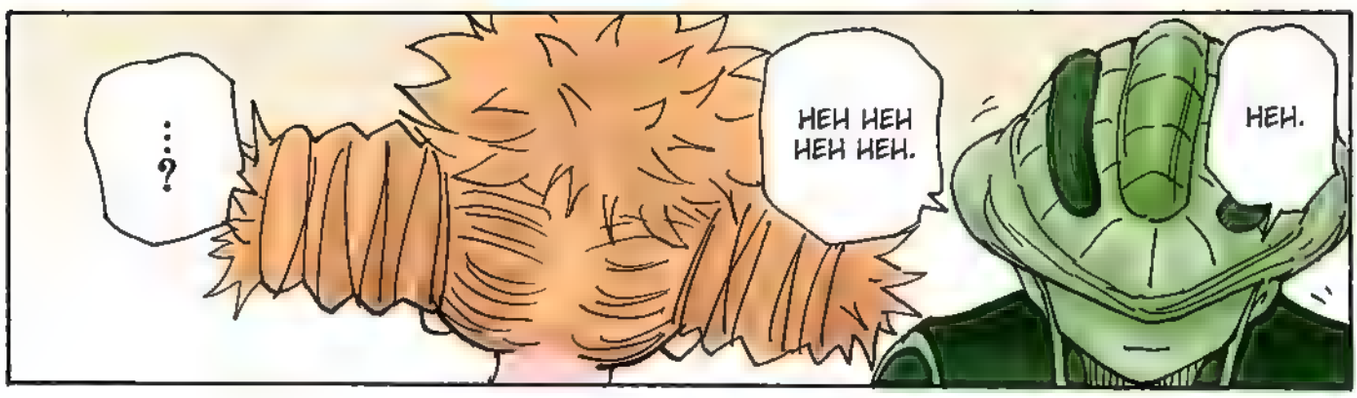


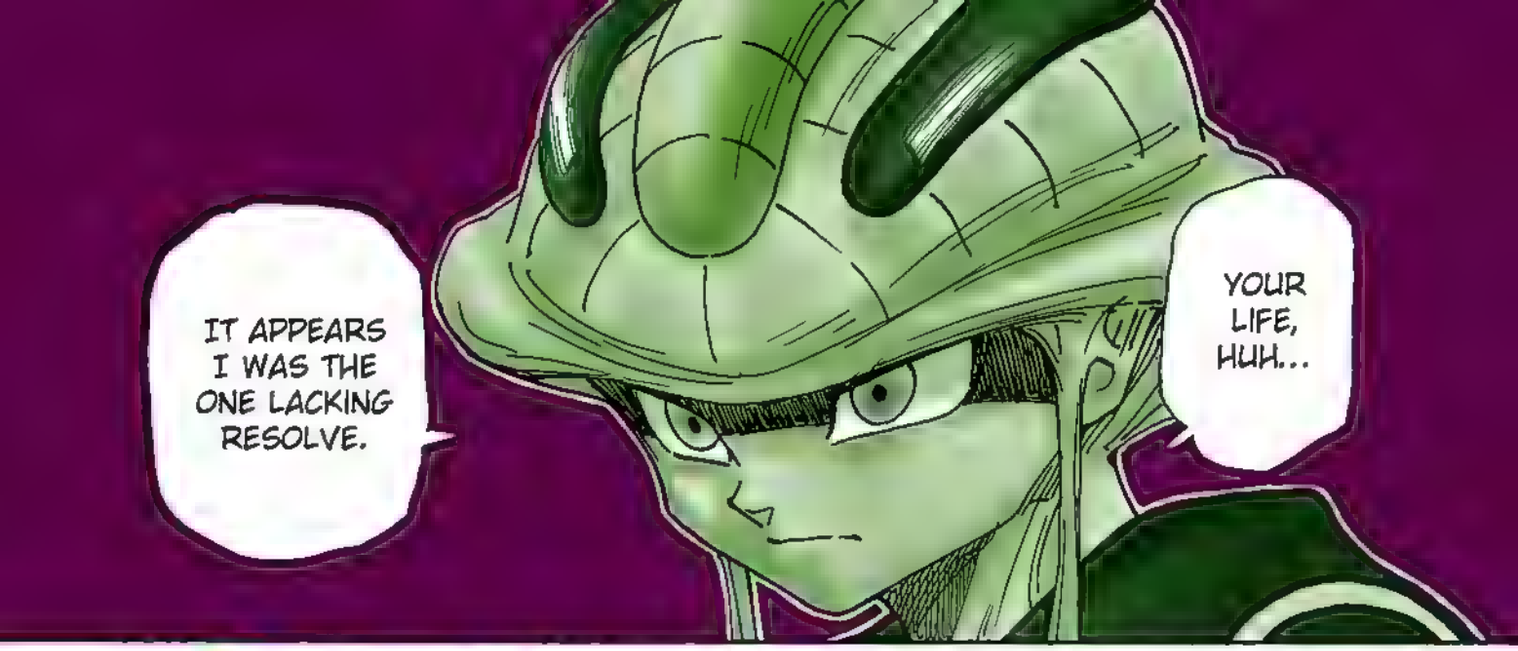

THAT WOULD BE TERRIBLE MANNERS...
AND ALL YOU'D RECEIVE FOR WINNING WOULD BE GARBAGE.
WHEN I LOSE, I'LL BECOME GARBAGE.

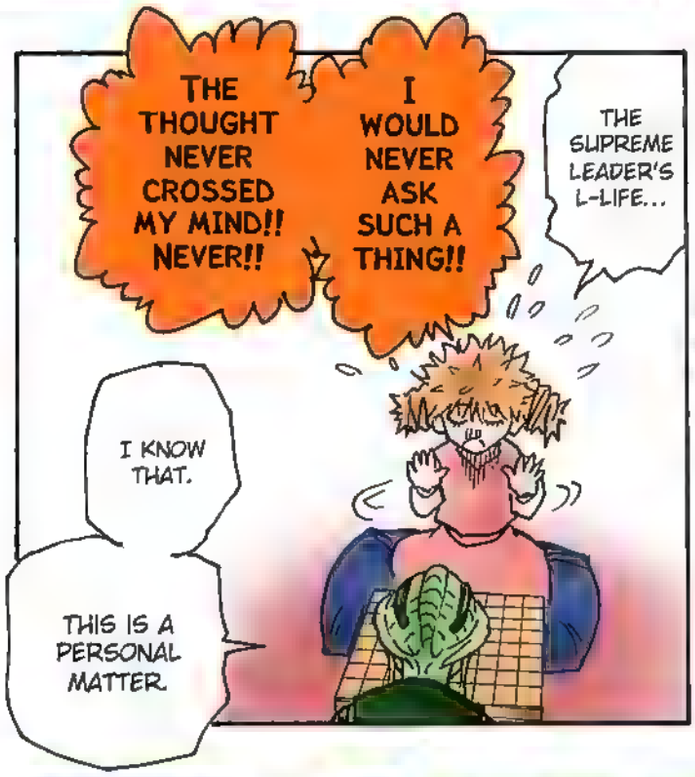

YOU SEE...
UMM...

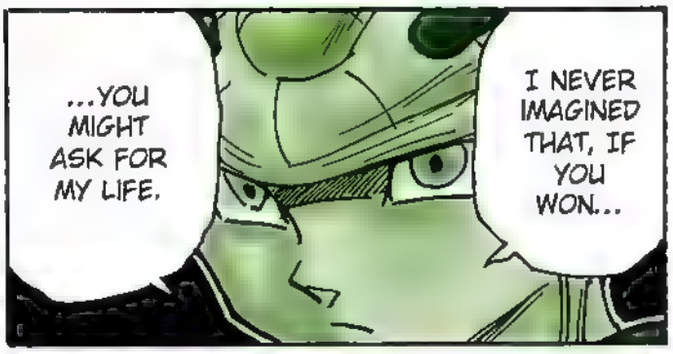

SHE HAS NEITHER FEAR NOR GREED.
VERY WELL...


I'LL THINK ABOUT IT LATER, AFTER I WIN.
I'VE SPENT ALL OF MY TIME THINKING ABOUT GUNGI SO...

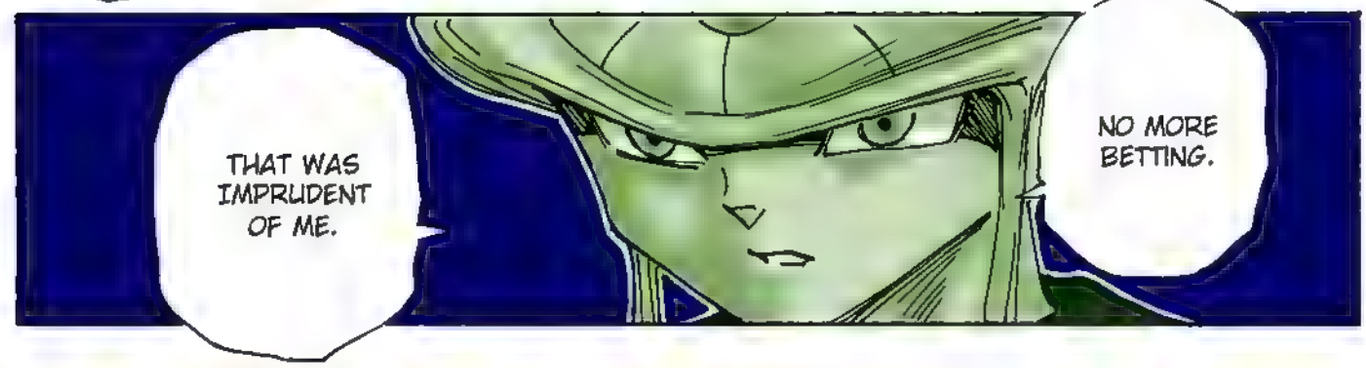

...?
HEH HEH HEH HEH.
HEH.

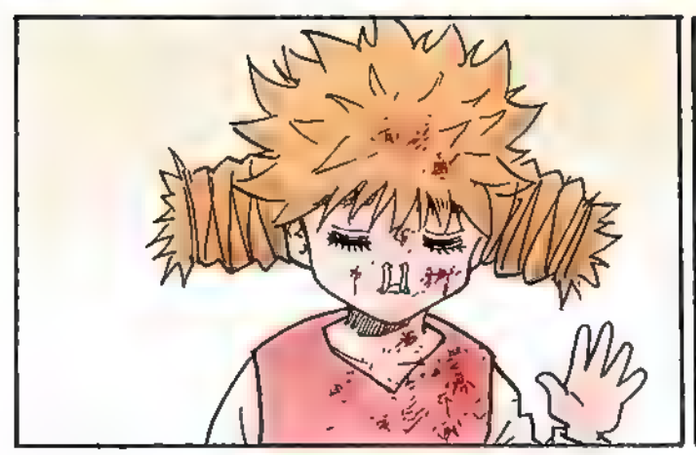

IT APPEARS I WAS THE ONE LACKING RESOLVE.
YOUR LIFE, HUH...

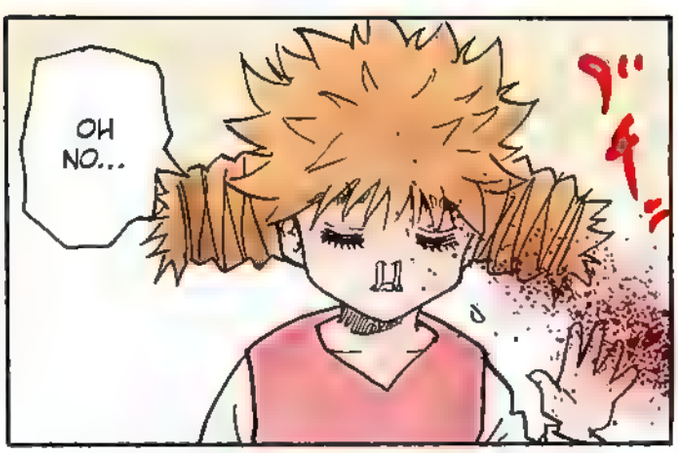

THE THOUGHT NEVER CROSSED MY MIND!! NEVER!!
I WOULD NEVER ASK SUCH A THING!!
THE SUPREME LEADER'S L-LIFE...
I KNOW THAT.
THIS IS A PERSONAL MATTER.

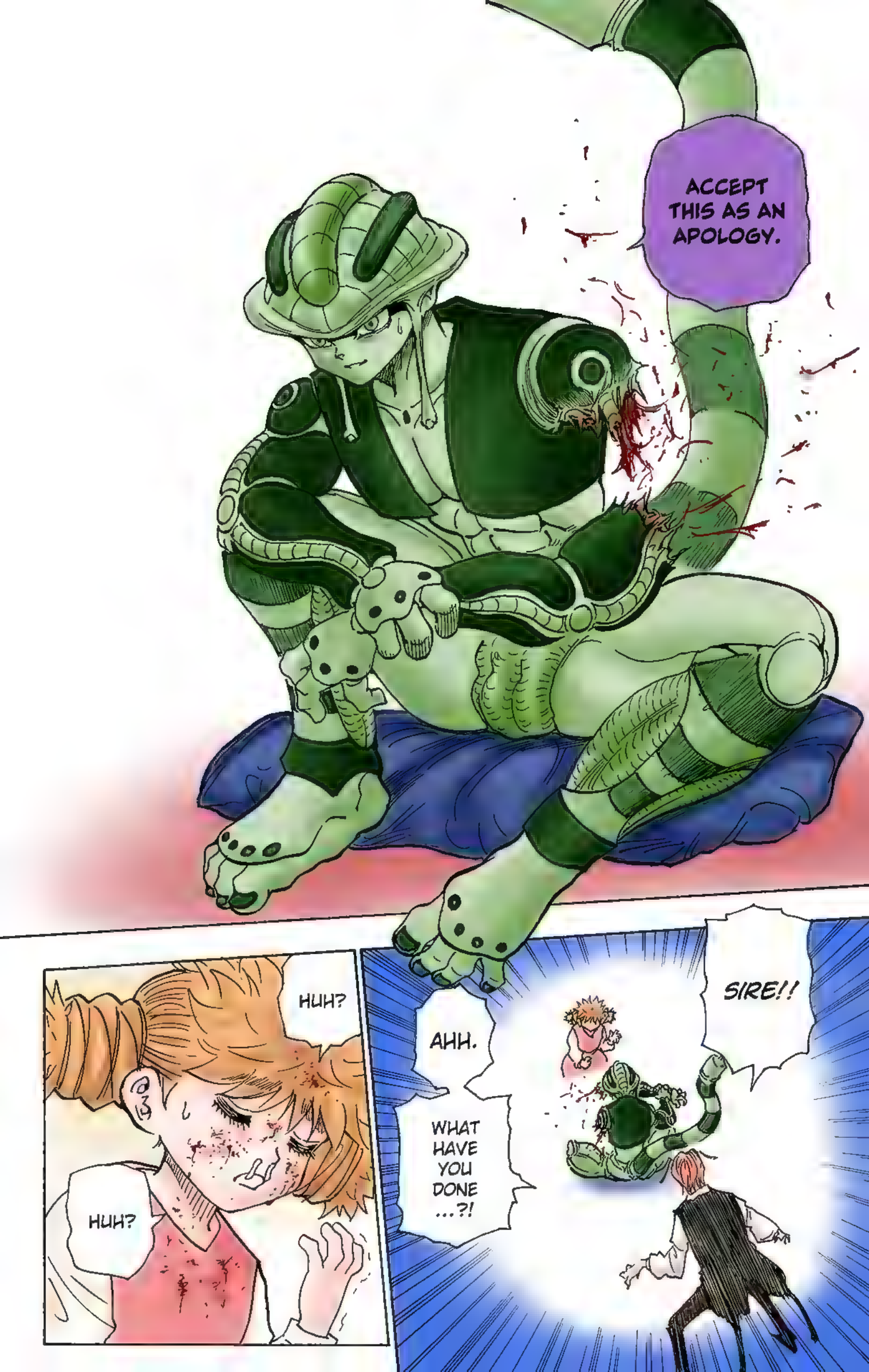

...YOU MIGHT ASK FOR MY LIFE.
I NEVER IMAGINED THAT, IF YOU WON...

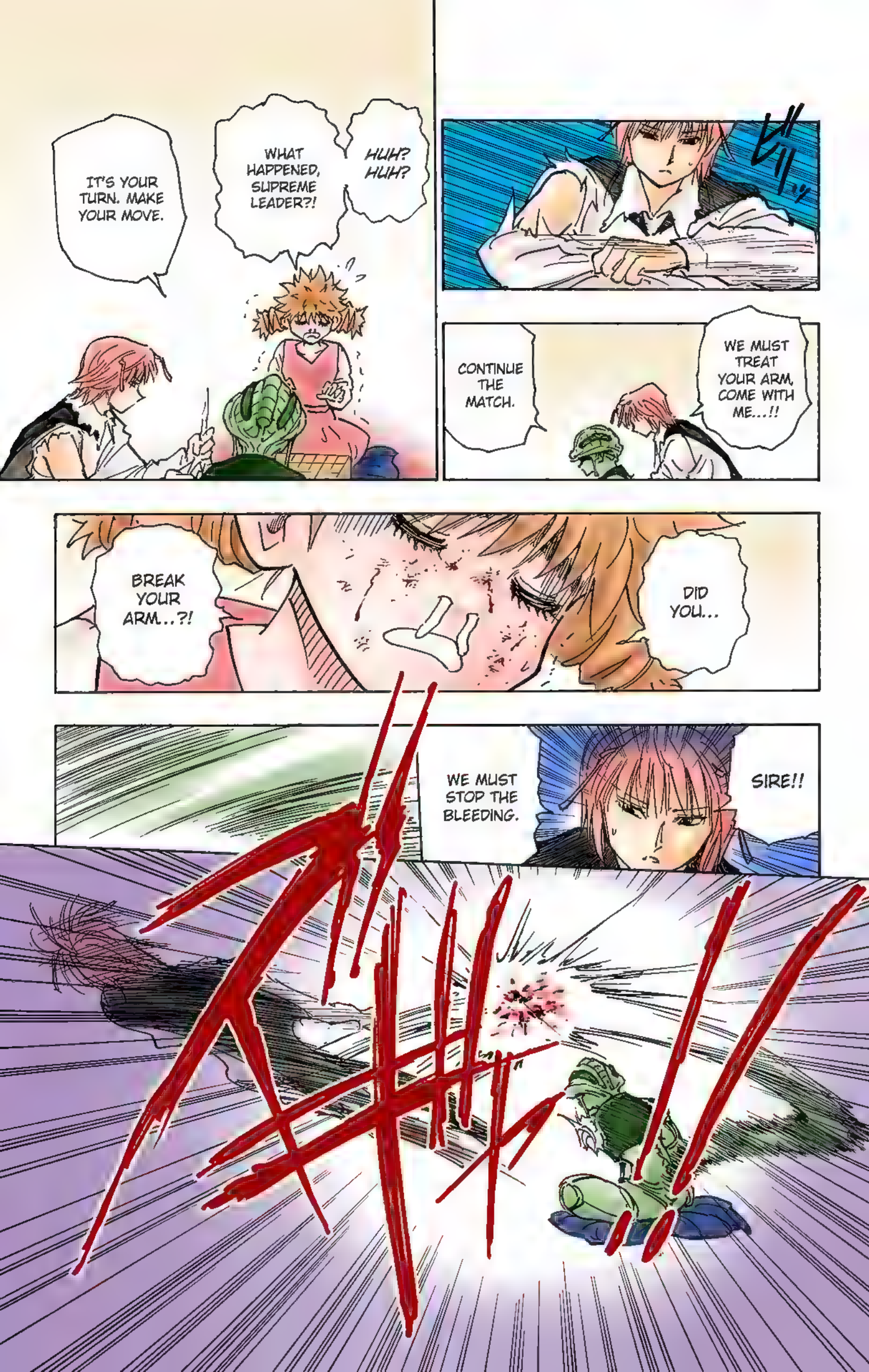
SILENCE.
SIRE.

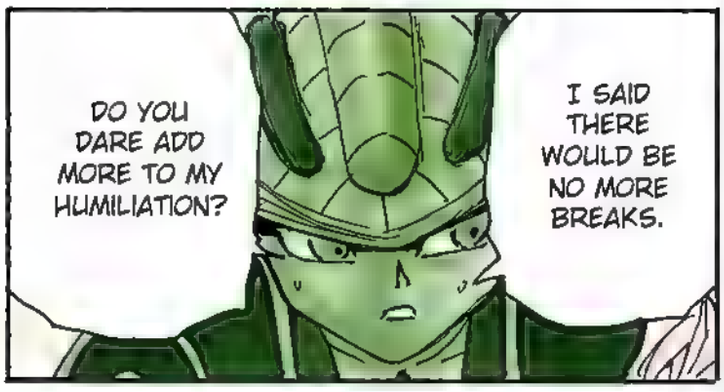

THAT WAS IMPRUDENT OF ME.
NO MORE BETTING.

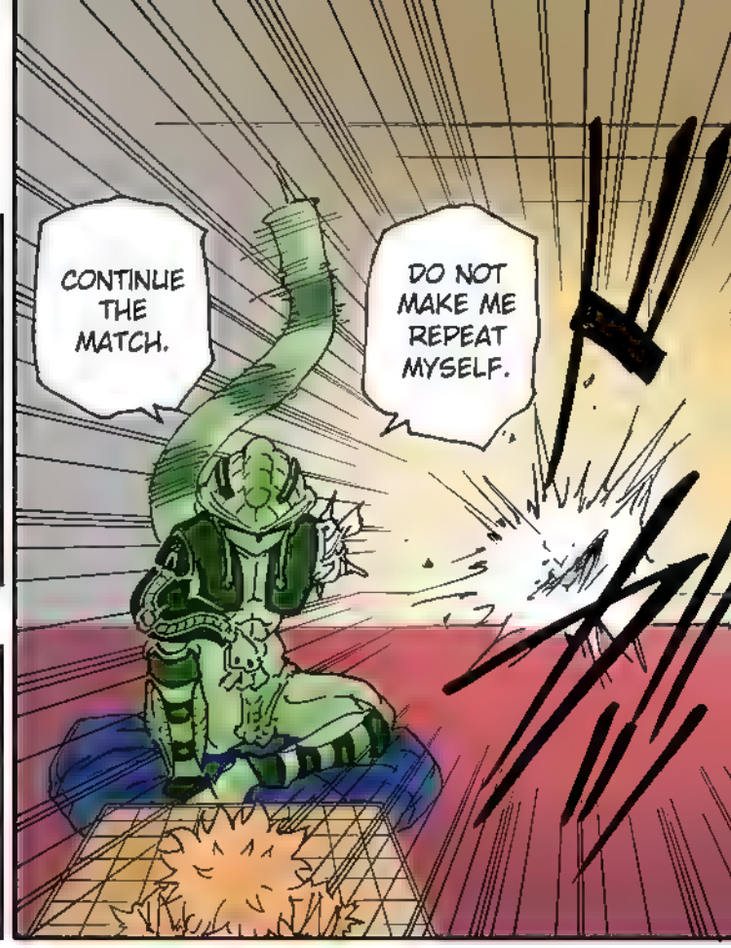


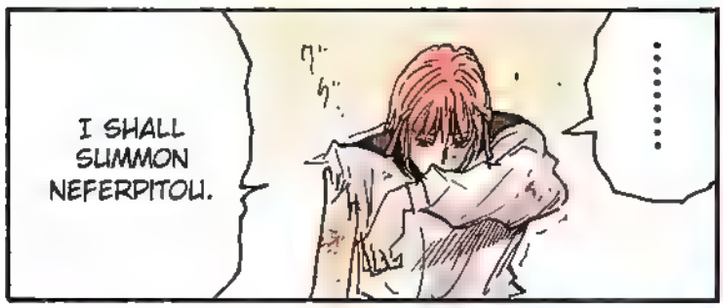

OH NO...

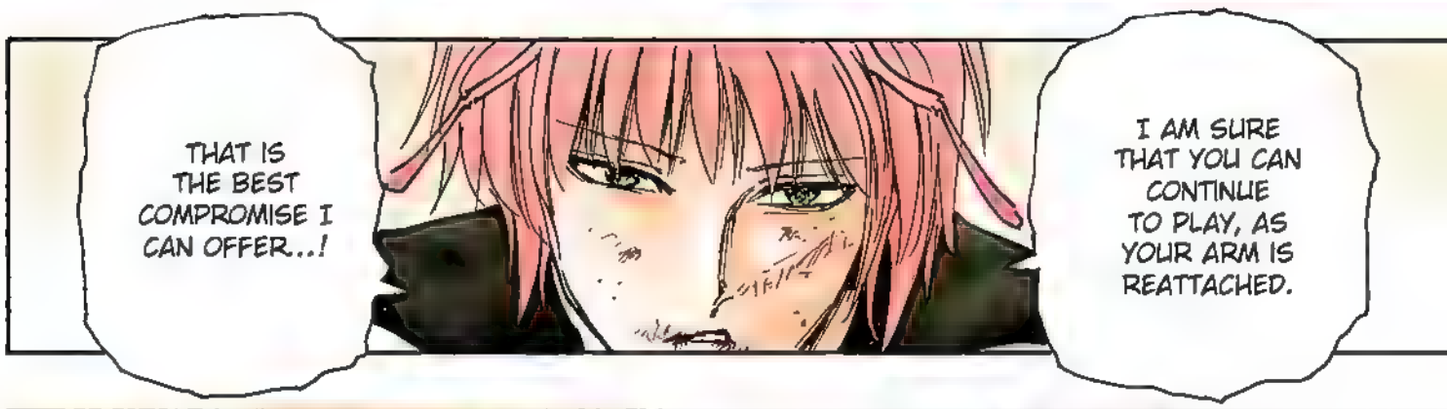

ACCEPT THIS AS AN APOLOGY.
HUH?
HUH?
SIRE!!
AHH.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ...?!

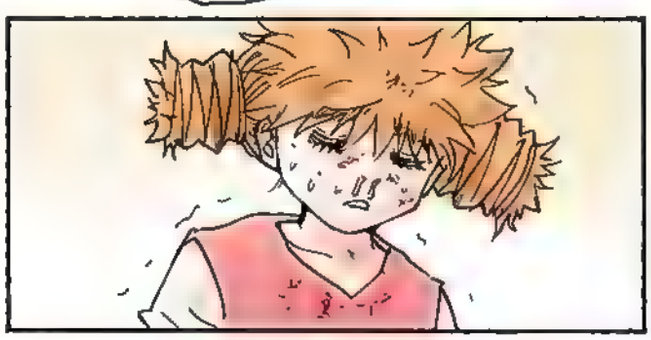

IT'S YOUR TURN. MAKE YOUR MOVE.
WHAT HAPPENED, SUPREME LEADER?!
HUH? HUH?
CONTINUE THE MATCH.
WE MUST TREAT YOUR ARM, COME WITH ME...!!
BREAK YOUR ARM..?!
DID YOU...
WE MUST STOP THE BLEEDING.
SIRE!!

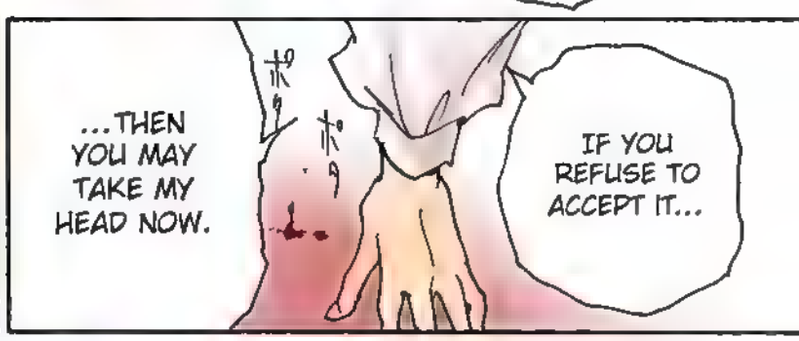

DO YOU DARE ADD MORE TO MY HUMILIATION?
I SAID THERE WOULD BE NO MORE BREAKS.

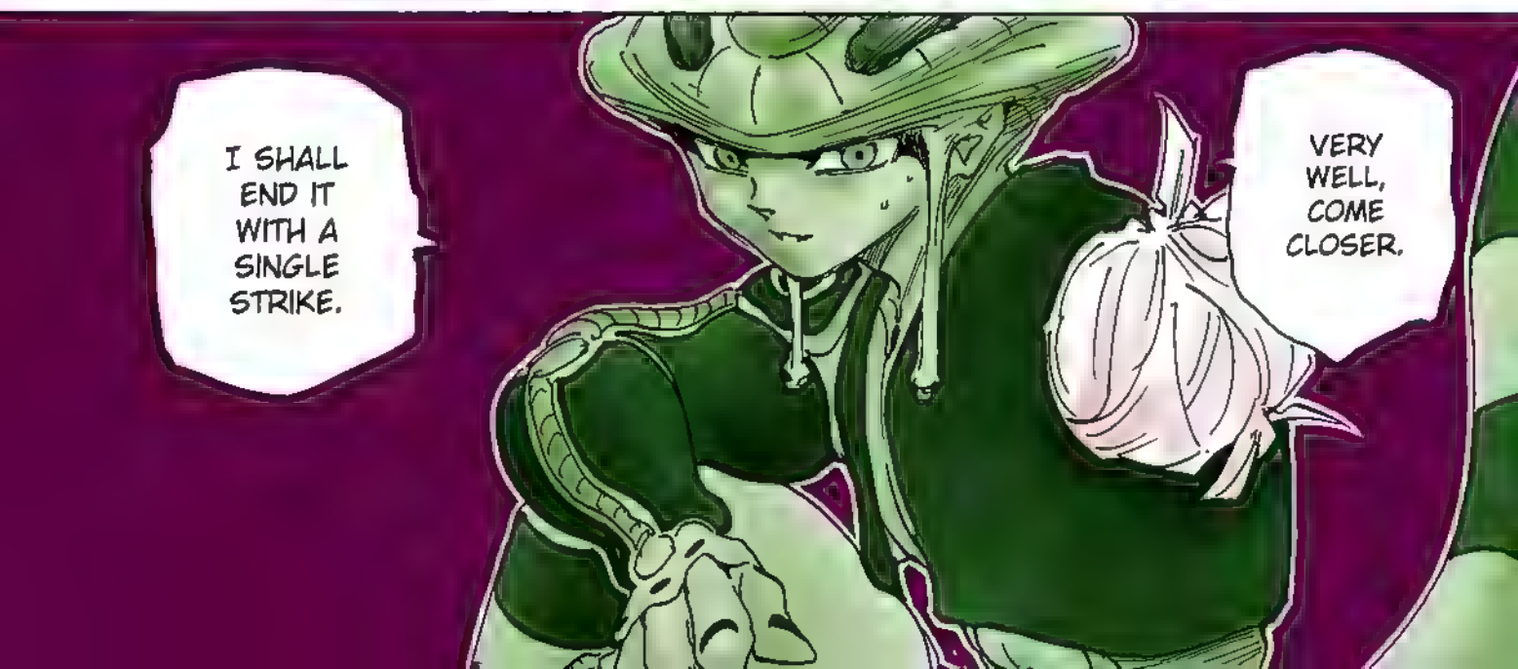

CONTINUE THE MATCH.
DO NOT MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF.

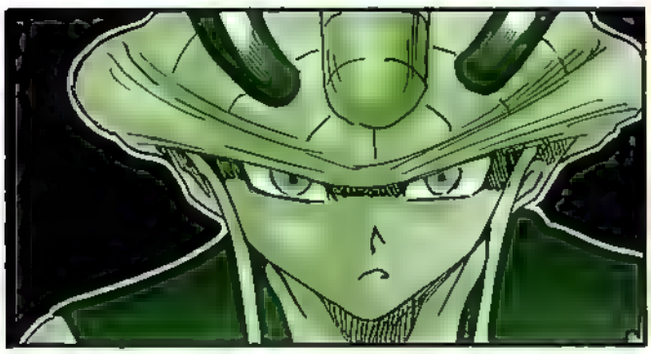

I SHALL SUMMON NEFERPITOU.
.....

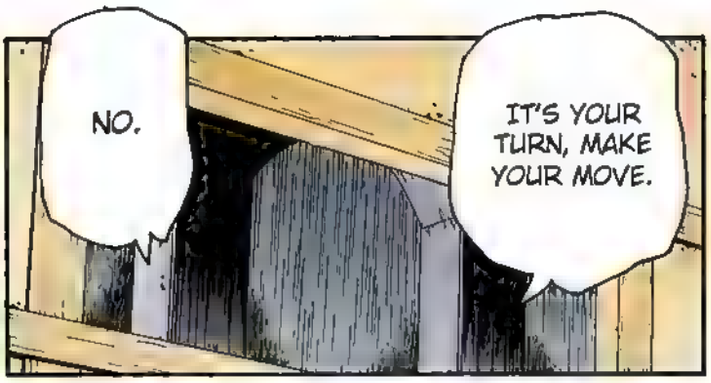

THAT IS THE BEST COMPROMISE I CAN OFFER...!
I AM SURE THAT YOU CAN CONTINUE TO PLAY, AS YOUR ARM IS REATTACHED.

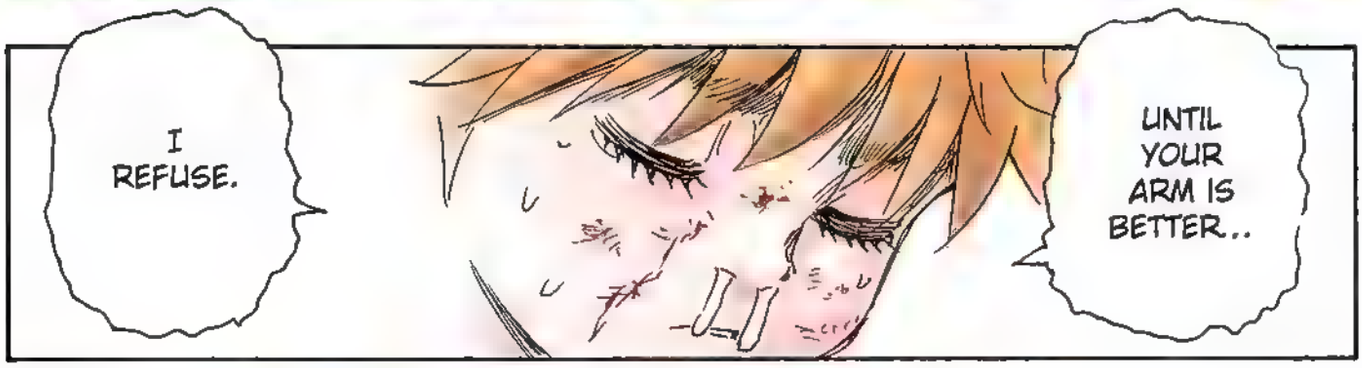


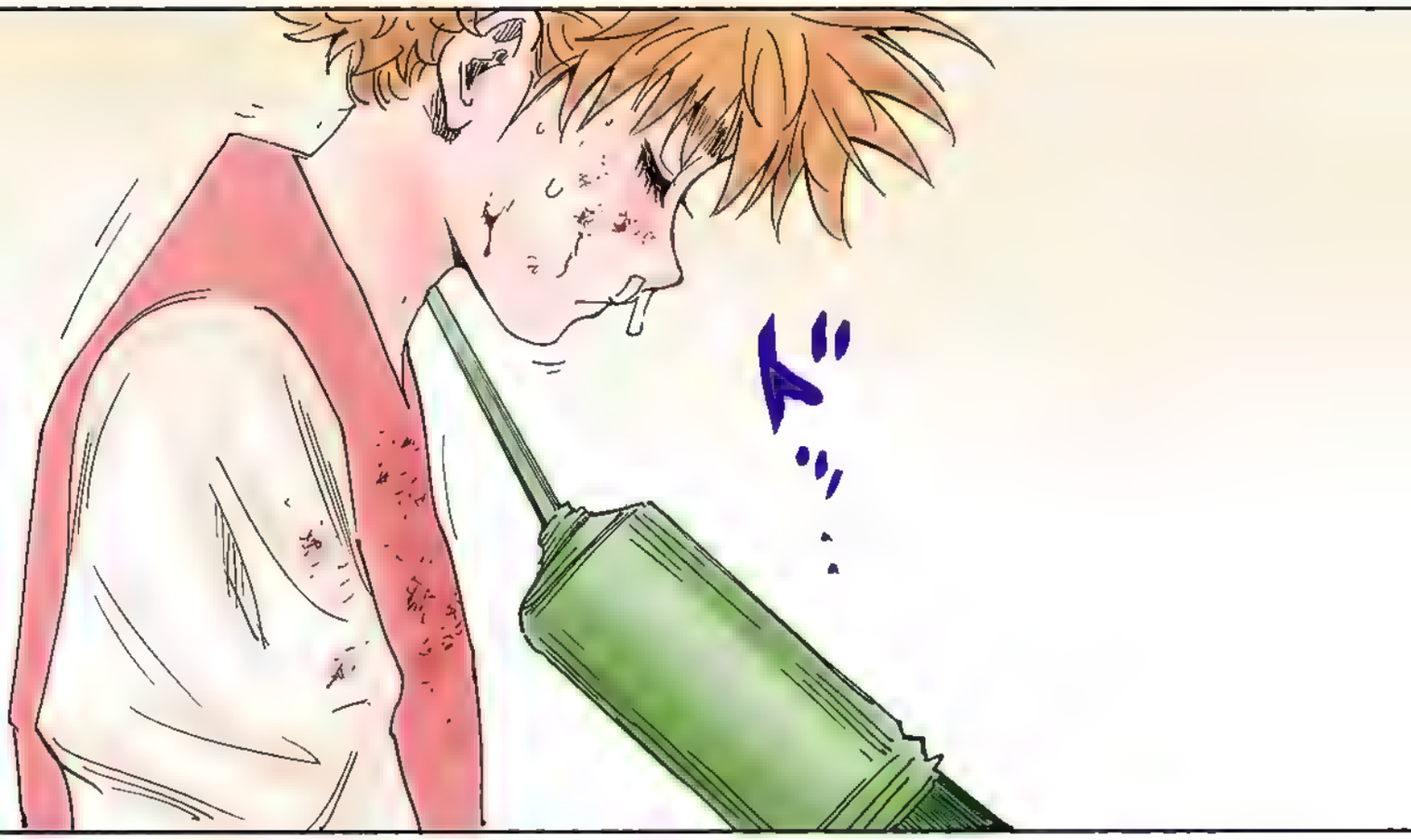

...THEN YOU MAY TAKE MY HEAD NOW.
IF YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT IT...

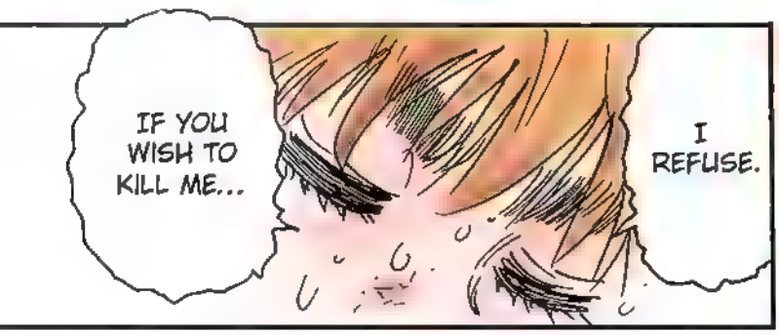

I SHALL END IT WITH A SINGLE STRIKE.
VERY WELL, COME CLOSER.

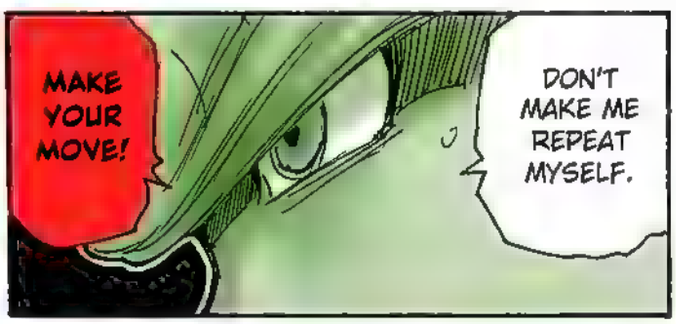


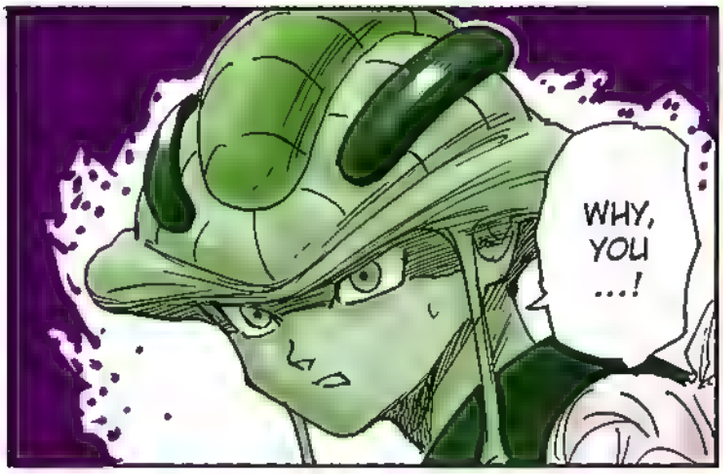

NO.
IT'S YOUR TURN, MAKE YOUR MOVE.


I REFUSE.
UNTIL YOUR ARM IS BETTER..

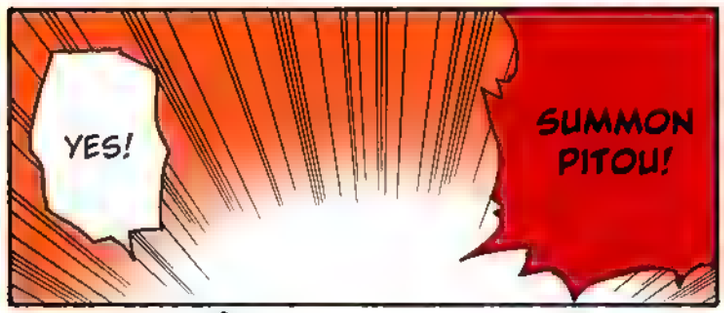



IF YOU WISH TO KILL ME...
I REFUSE.

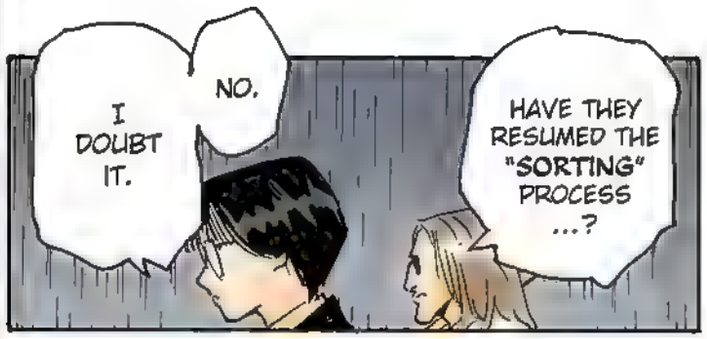

MAKE YOUR MOVE!
DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF.

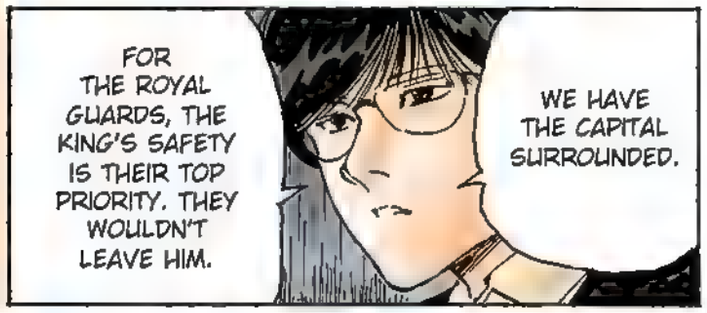

WHY, YOU ...!

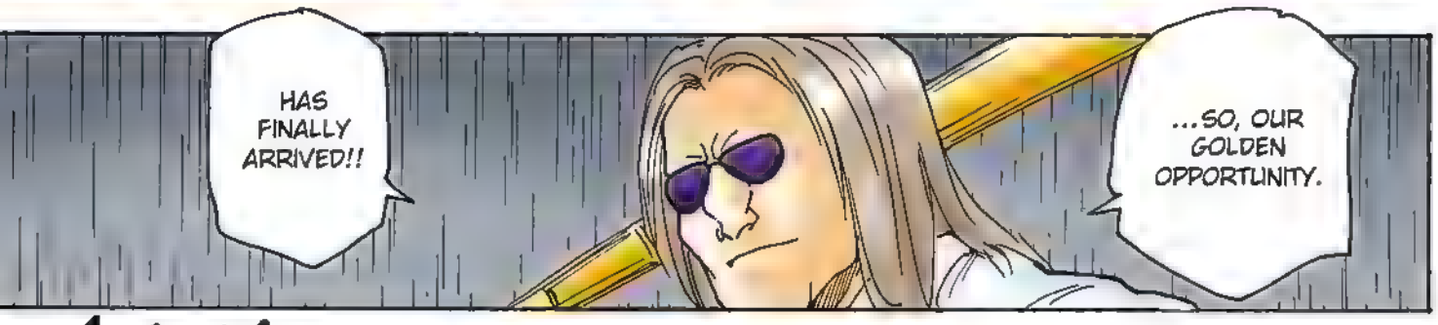
...DO IT IN GUNGI ...!!


YES!
SUMMON PITOU!

THERE'S NO DOUBT...!
ALL THE "PUPPETS" ARE GONE!

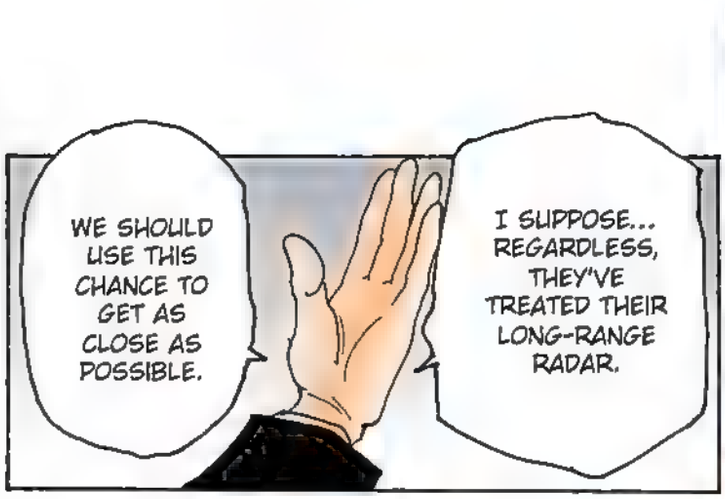






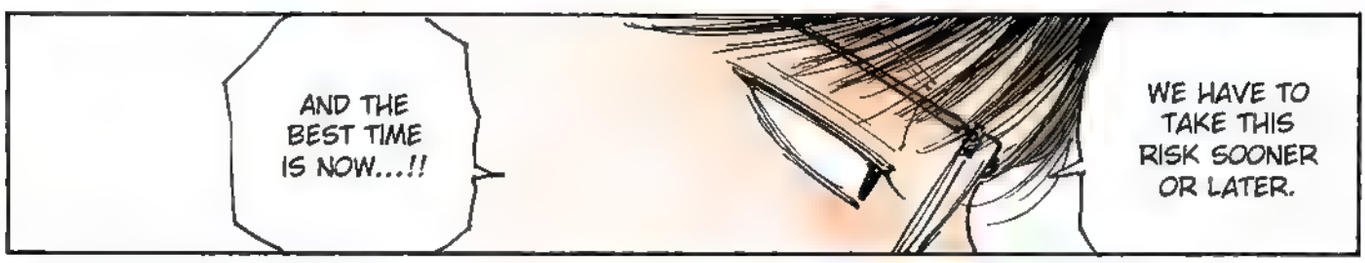
...THE PALACE!!

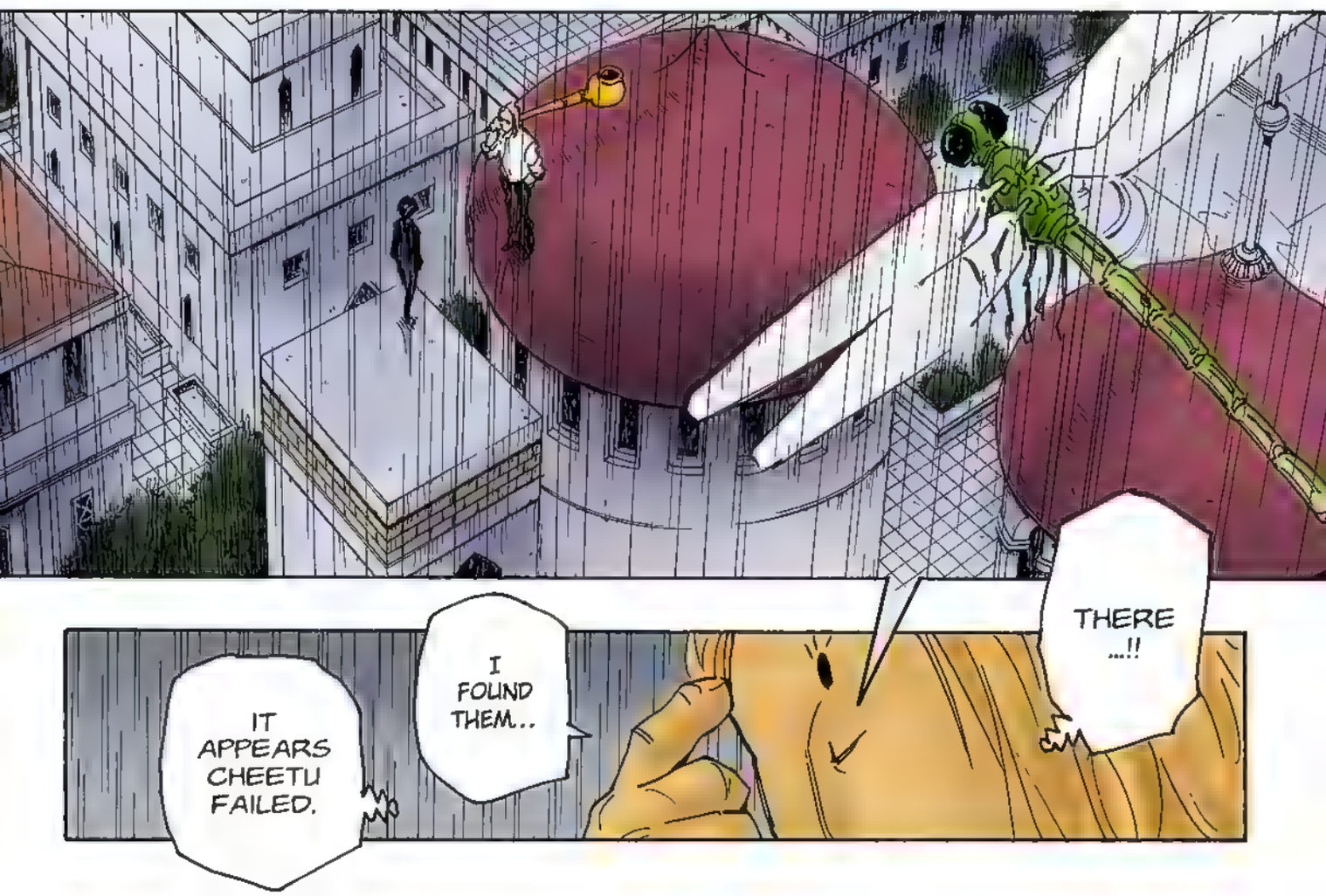
TO INFILTRATE...

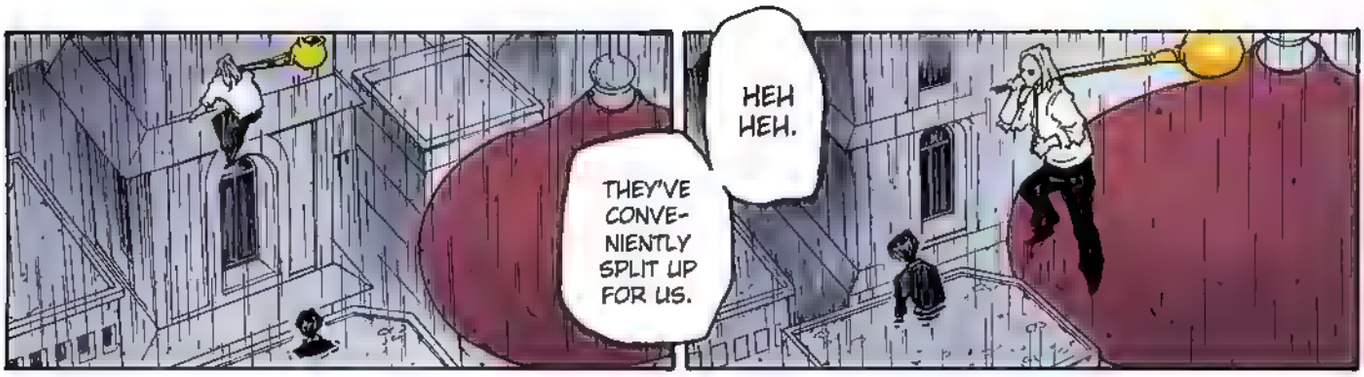

WE SHOULD USE THIS CHANCE TO GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE.
I SUPPOSE... REGARDLESS, THEY'VE TREATED THEIR LONG-RANGE RADAR.

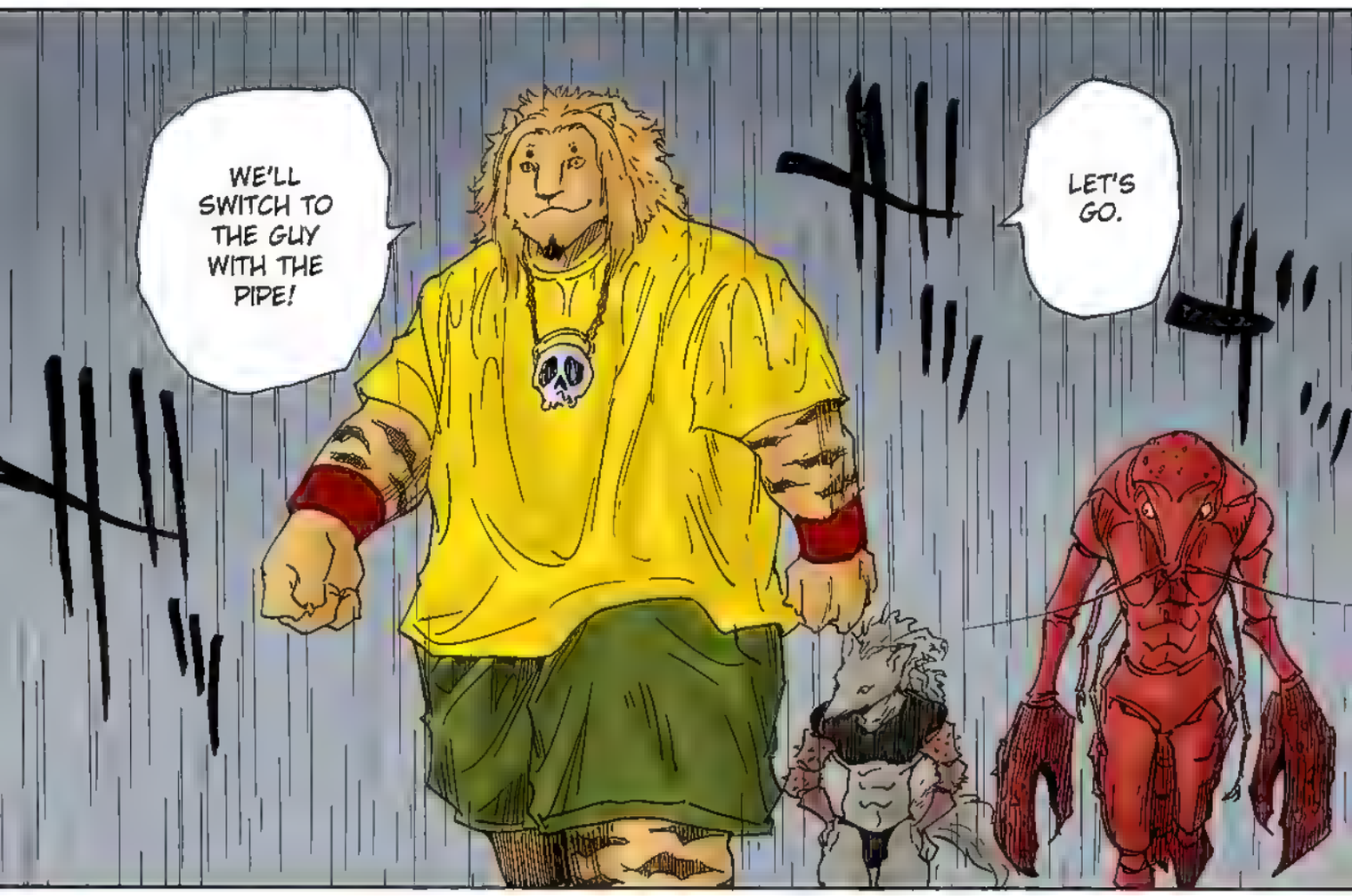
THEY WOULDN'T USE ANY TACTIC THAT MIGHT ENDANGER THE KING.
THAT SHOULDN'T BE THE CASE.
HOWEVER, IT COULD BE A TRAP.
THEY WOULD IF THE KING ORDERED IT, WOULDN'T THEY?

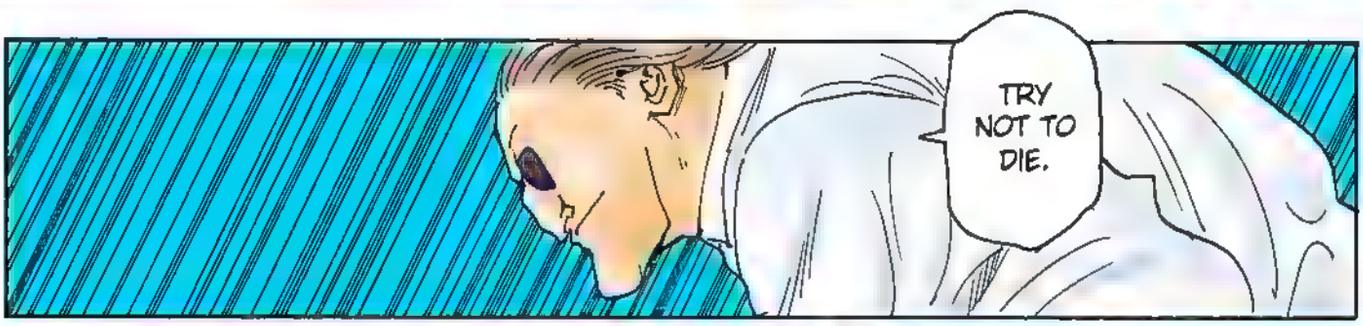
OR ELSE THE PLAN WILL LIKELY FAIL.
I MUST CREATE AN "EXIT" NEAR THE PALACE...

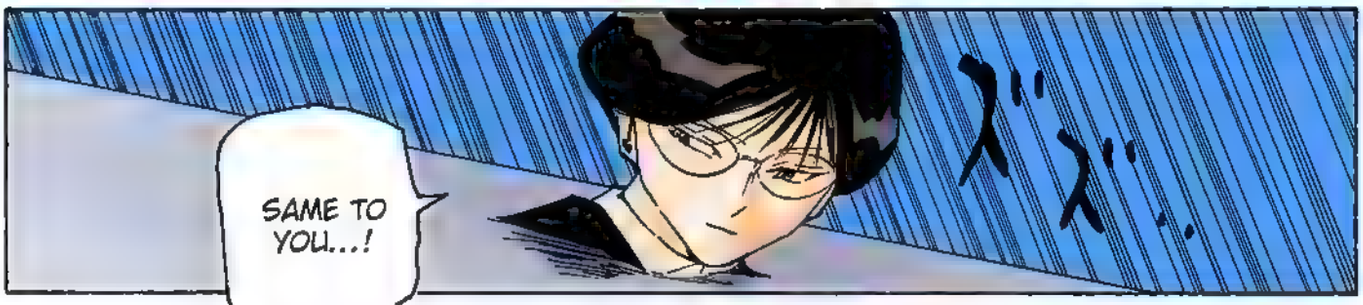

AND THE BEST TIME IS NOW...!!
WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS RISK SOONER OR LATER.

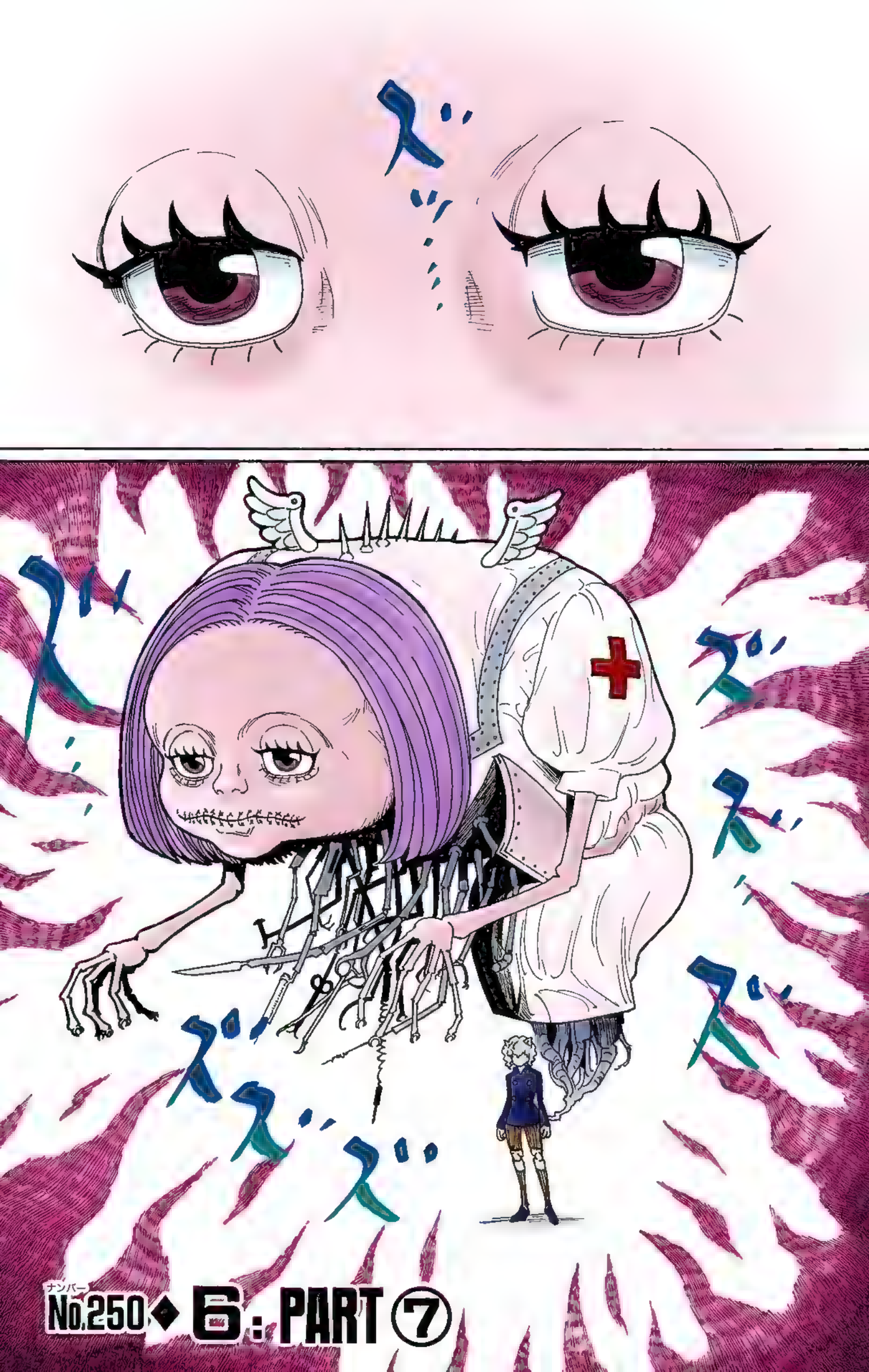

IT APPEARS CHEETU FAILED.
I FOUND THEM...
THERE ...!!


HEH HEH.
THEY'VE CONVE-NIENTLY SPLIT UP FOR US.


WE'LL SWITCH TO THE GUY WITH THE PIPE!
LET'S GO.


TRY NOT TO DIE.


SAME TO YOU...!
ズズ...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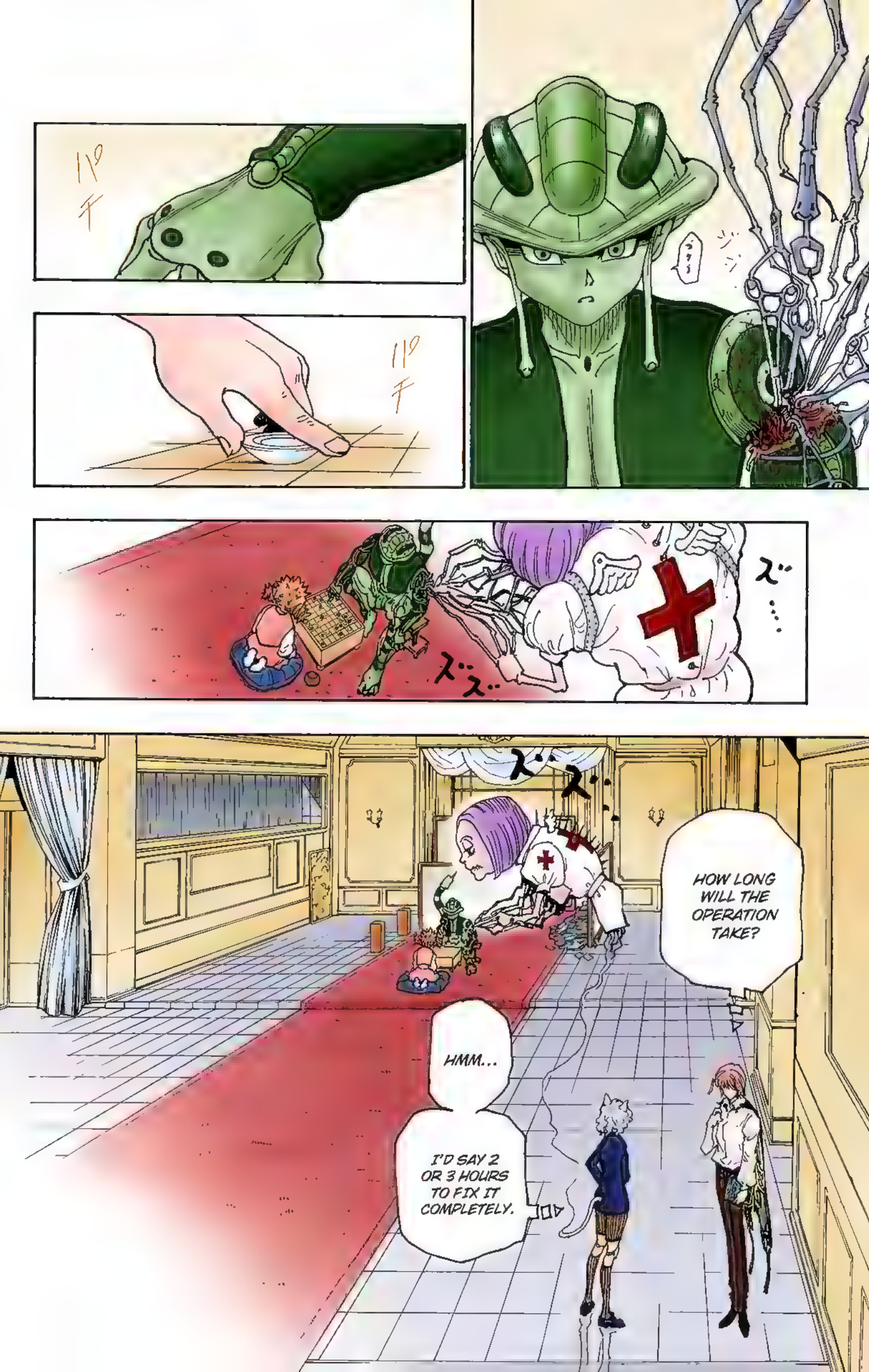
No.250 ◆ 6：PART ⑦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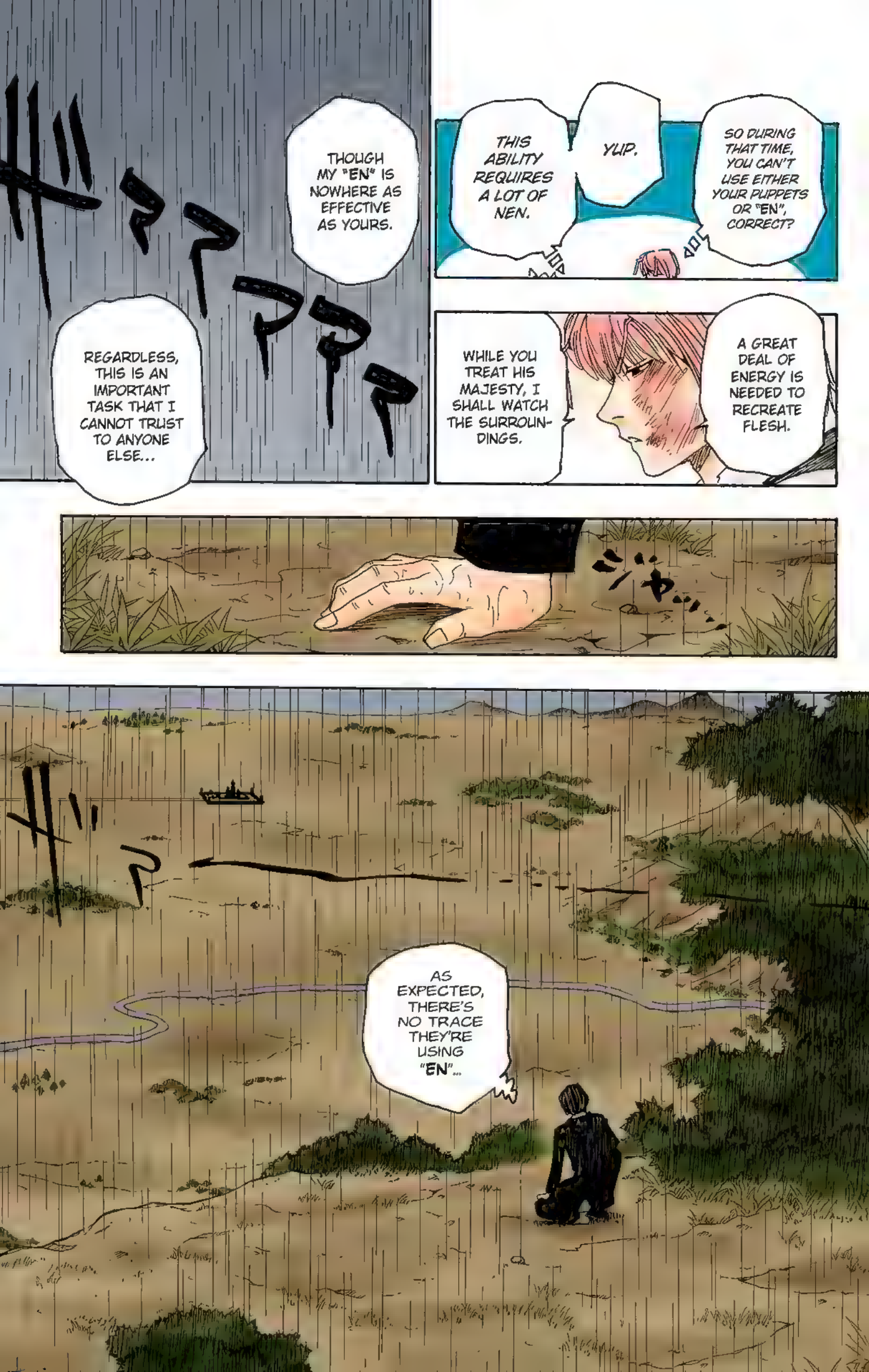
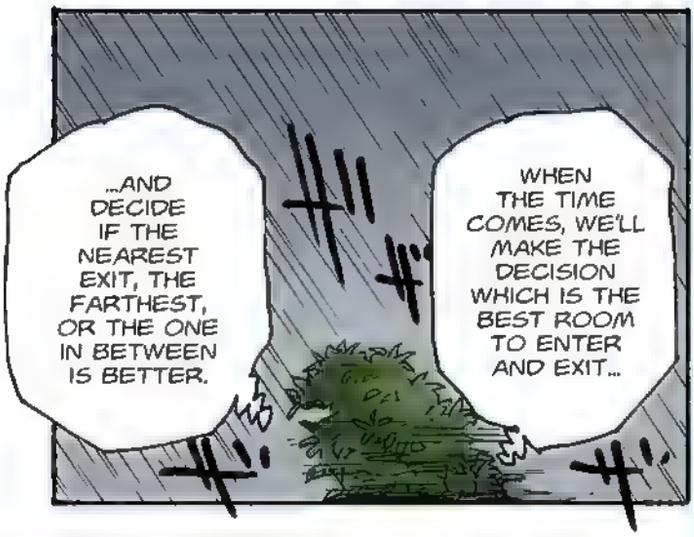
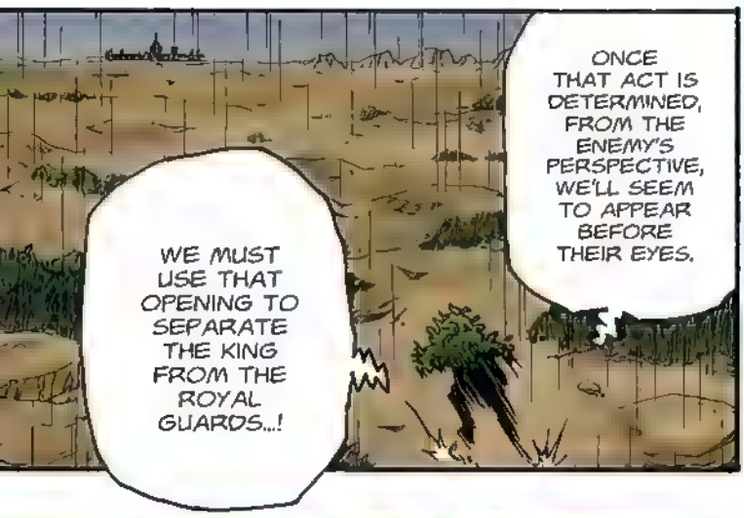
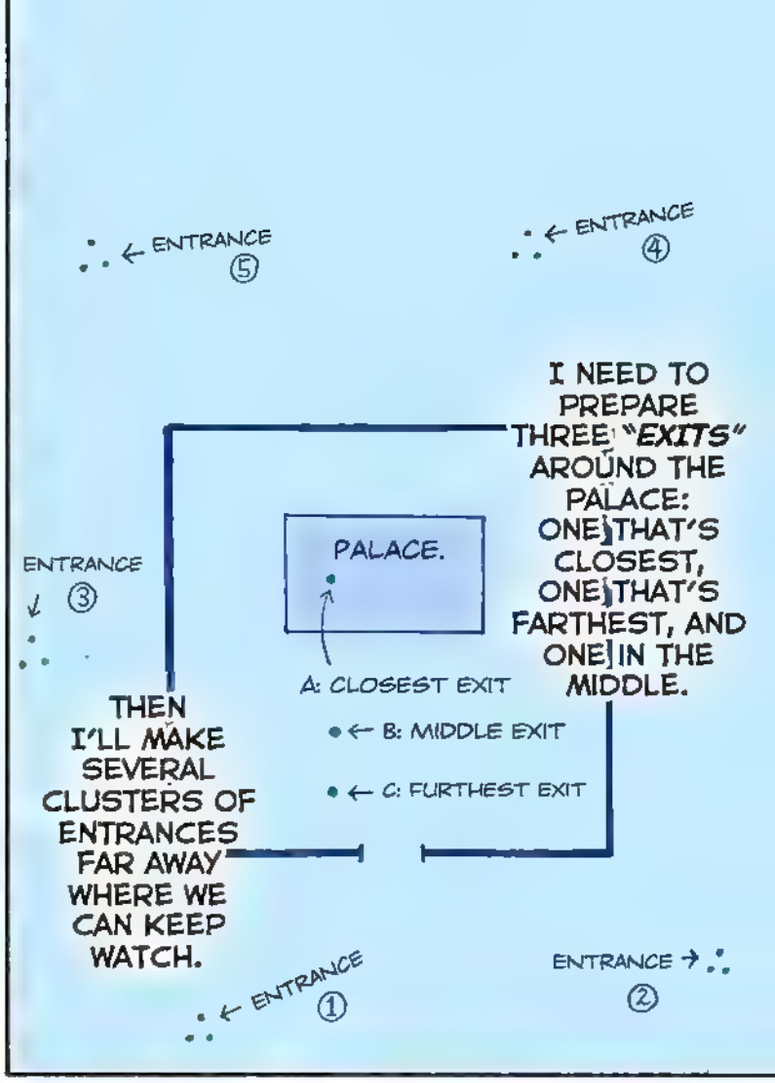
HOW LONG WILL THE OPERATION TAKE?
HMM...
I'D SAY 2 OR 3 HOURS TO FIX IT COMPLETELY.


THOUGH MY "EN" IS NOWHERE AS EFFECTIVE AS YOURS.
REGARDLESS, THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TASK THAT I CANNOT TRUST TO ANYONE ELSE...
THIS ABILITY REQUIRES A LOT OF NEN.
YUP.
SO DURING THAT TIME, YOU CAN'T USE EITHER YOUR PUPPETS OR "EN", CORRECT?
WHILE YOU TREAT HIS MAJESTY, I SHALL WATCH THE SURROUNDINGS.
A GREAT DEAL OF ENERGY IS NEEDED TO RECREATE FLESH.
AS EXPECTED, THERE'S NO TRACE THEY'RE USING "EN"...

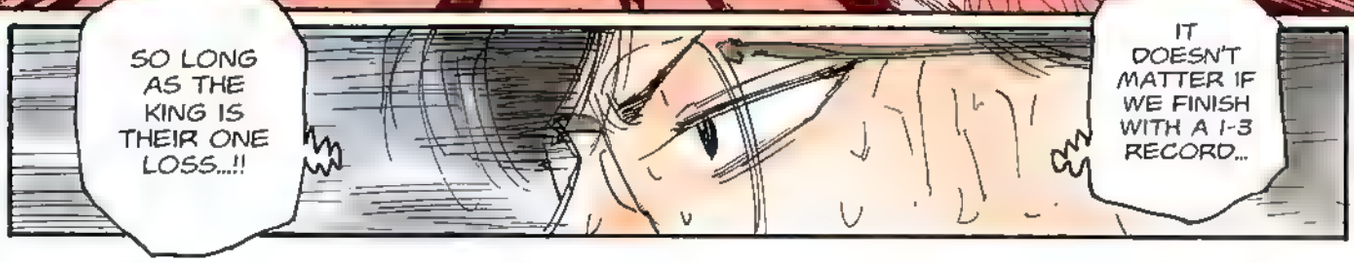
BE PATIENT.
THE CLOSER THE "EXIT" IS TO THE PALACE, THE BETTER. BUT IF I'M SPOTTER, IT WILL ALL BE USELESS.
THE SUN WILL ALSO SET SOON.
LUCKILY, THE RAIN HELPS TO LOWER THE VISIBILITY.
ONCE IT'S DARK, I WILL BECOME ONE WITH THE NIGHT AND PICKING OUT ENEMY AURA WILL BE EASIER.
WHILE I CAN ENTER AND EXIT FREELY, SHOOT AND THE OTHERS CAN ONLY USE THE EXIT TO LEAVE ONCE THEY ENTER THE "MANSION".
IF THE ENEMY PREPARES AN AMBUSH BY THE "EXIT", IT WILL MEAN SERIOUS TROUBLE...!!

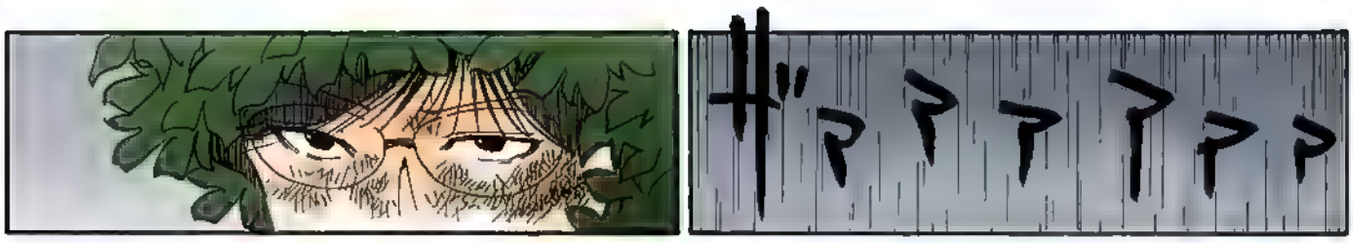

...AND DECIDE IF THE NEAREST EXIT, THE FARTHEST, OR THE ONE IN BETWEEN IS BETTER.
WHEN THE TIME COMES, WE'LL MAKE THE DECISION WHICH IS THE BEST ROOM TO ENTER AND EXIT...


ONCE THAT ACT IS DETERMINED, FROM THE ENEMY'S PERSPECTIVE, WE'LL SEEM TO APPEAR BEFORE THEIR EYES.
WE MUST USE THAT OPENING TO SEPARATE THE KING FROM THE ROYAL GUARDS...!


ENTRANCE ⑤
ENTRANCE ④
I NEED TO PREPARE THREE "EXITS" AROUND THE PALACE: ONE THAT'S CLOSEST, ONE THAT'S FARTHEST, AND ONE IN THE MIDDLE.
PALACE.
ENTRANCE ③
A: CLOSEST EXIT
B: MIDDLE EXIT
C: FURTHEST EXIT
THEN I'LL MAKE SEVERAL CLUSTERS OF ENTRANCES FAR AWAY WHERE WE CAN KEEP WATCH.
ENTRANCE ①
ENTRANCE ②

THAT IS WHEN OUR RESPECTIVE BATTLES WILL BEGIN...!!


SO LONG AS THE KING IS THEIR ONE LOSS...!!
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE FINISH WITH A 1-3 RECORD...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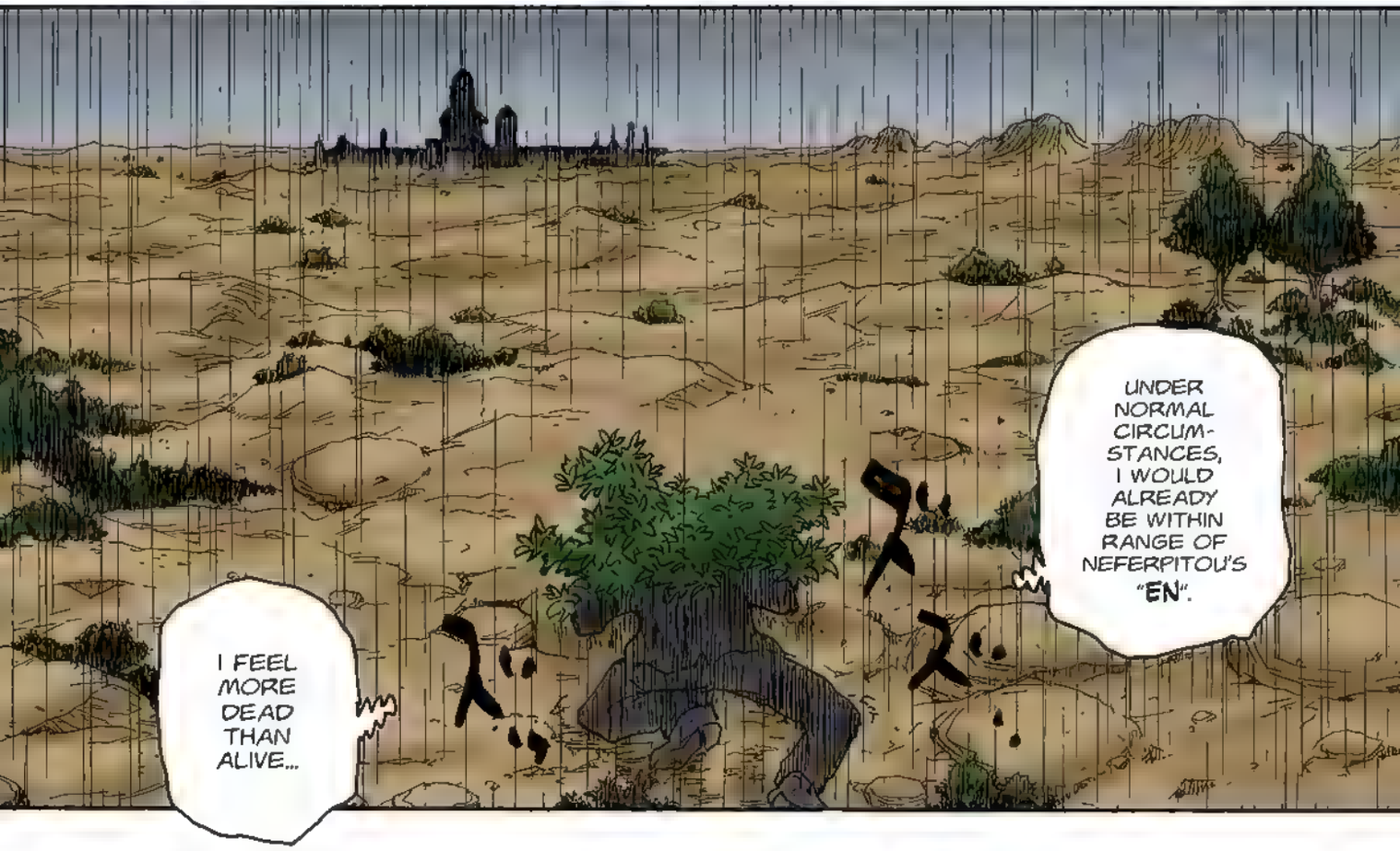
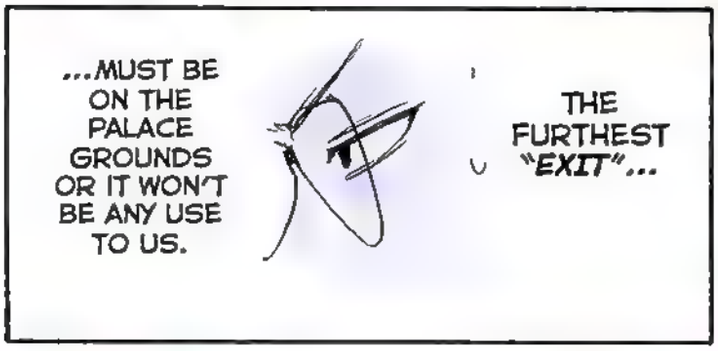
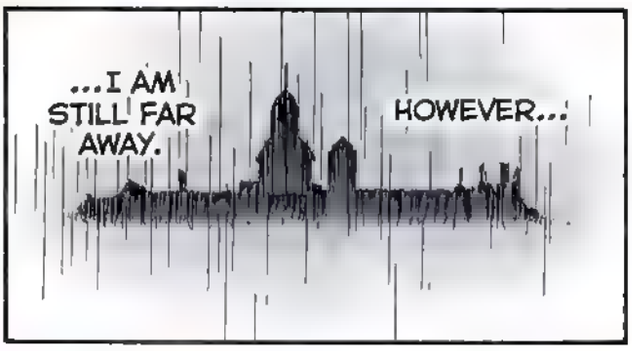
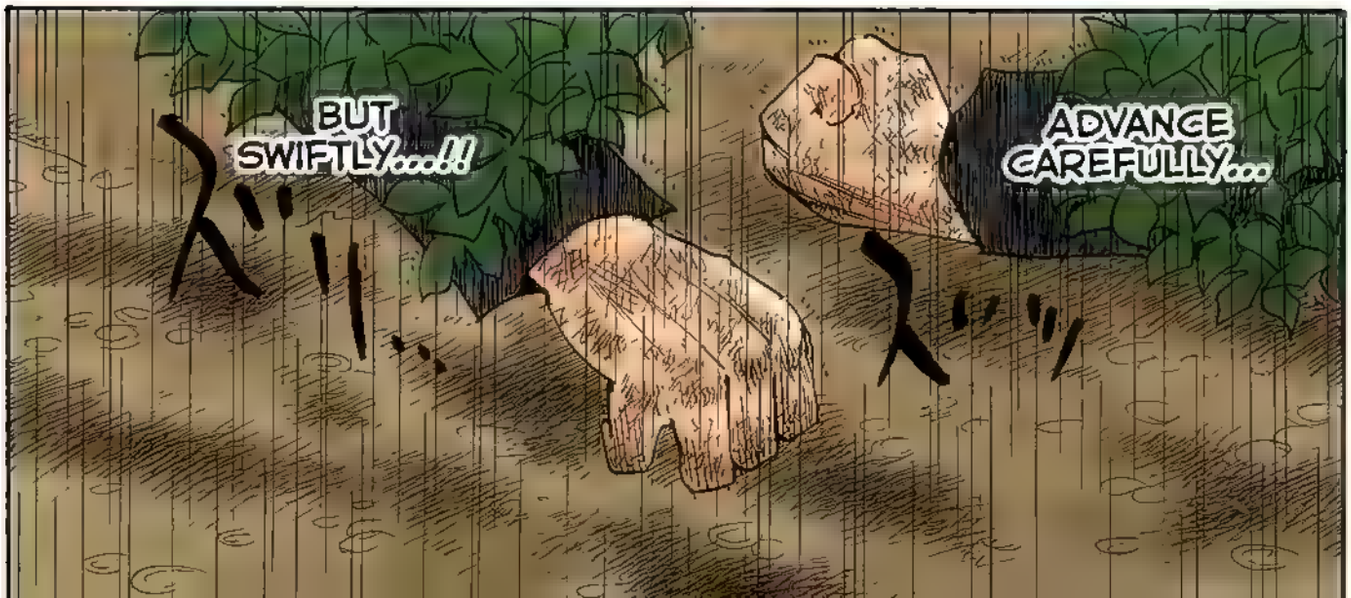
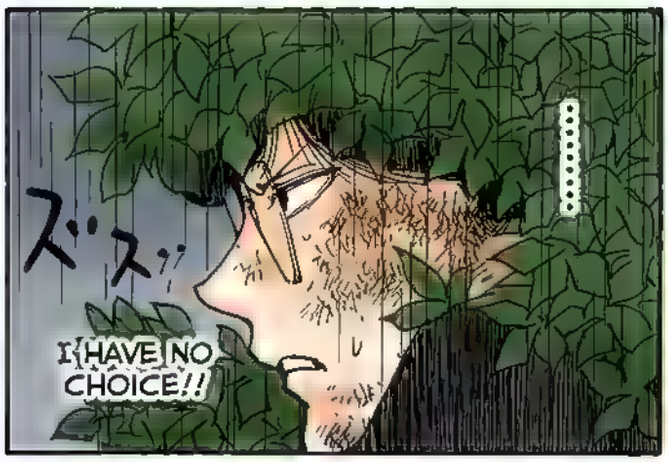
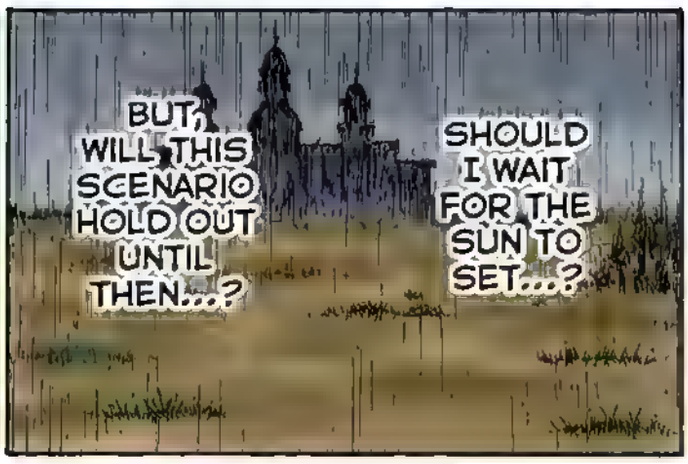

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUM-STANCES, I WOULD ALREADY BE WITHIN RANGE OF NEFERPITOU'S "EN".
I FEEL MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE...


...MUST BE ON THE PALACE GROUNDS OR IT WON'T BE ANY USE TO US.
THE FURTHEST "EXIT"...


...I AM STILL FAR AWAY.
HOWEVER...


BUT SWIFTLY...!!
ADVANCE CAREFULLY...





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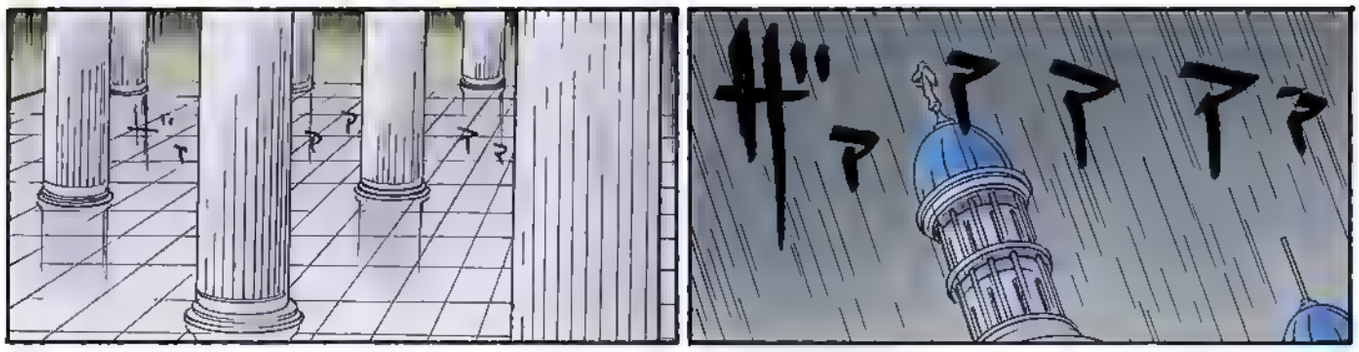
CLOSER!!
GO WITHOUT FEAR…!!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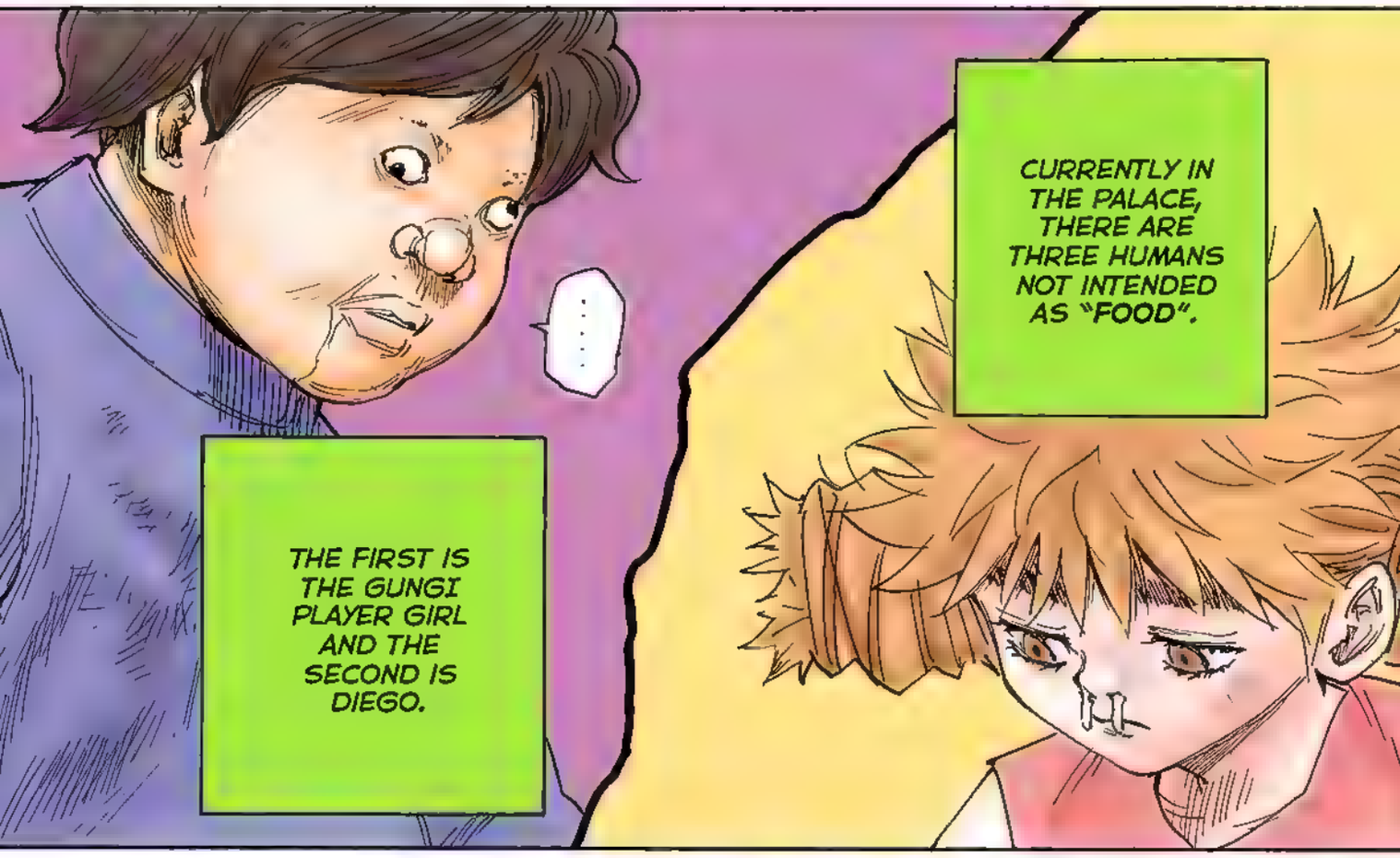
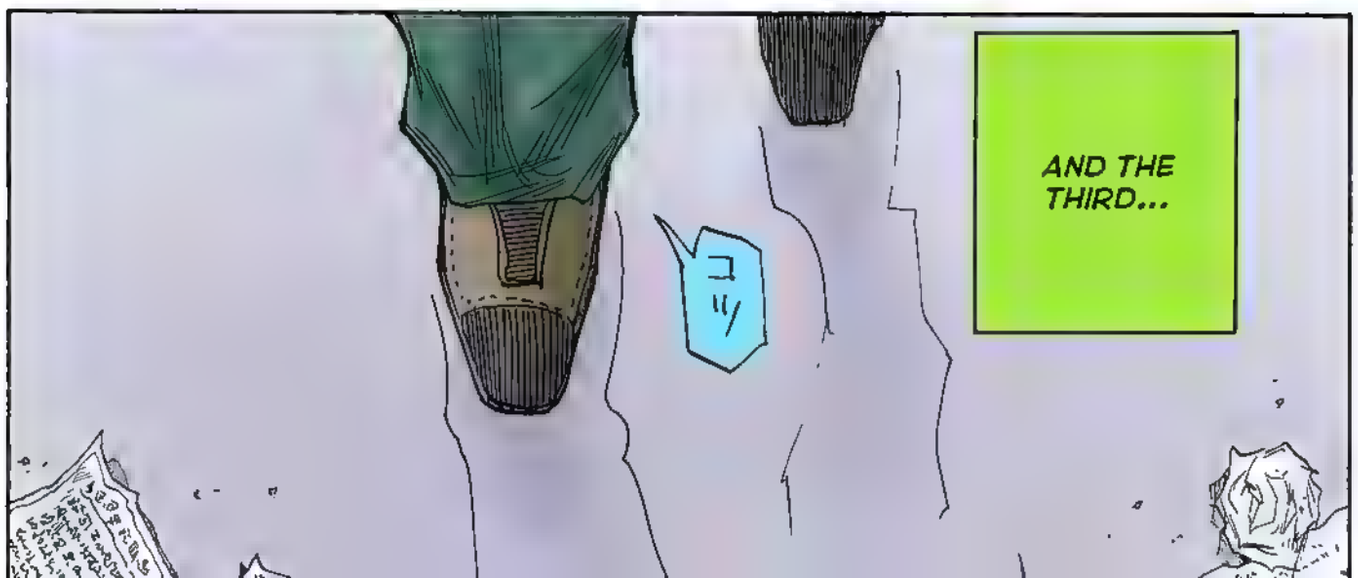
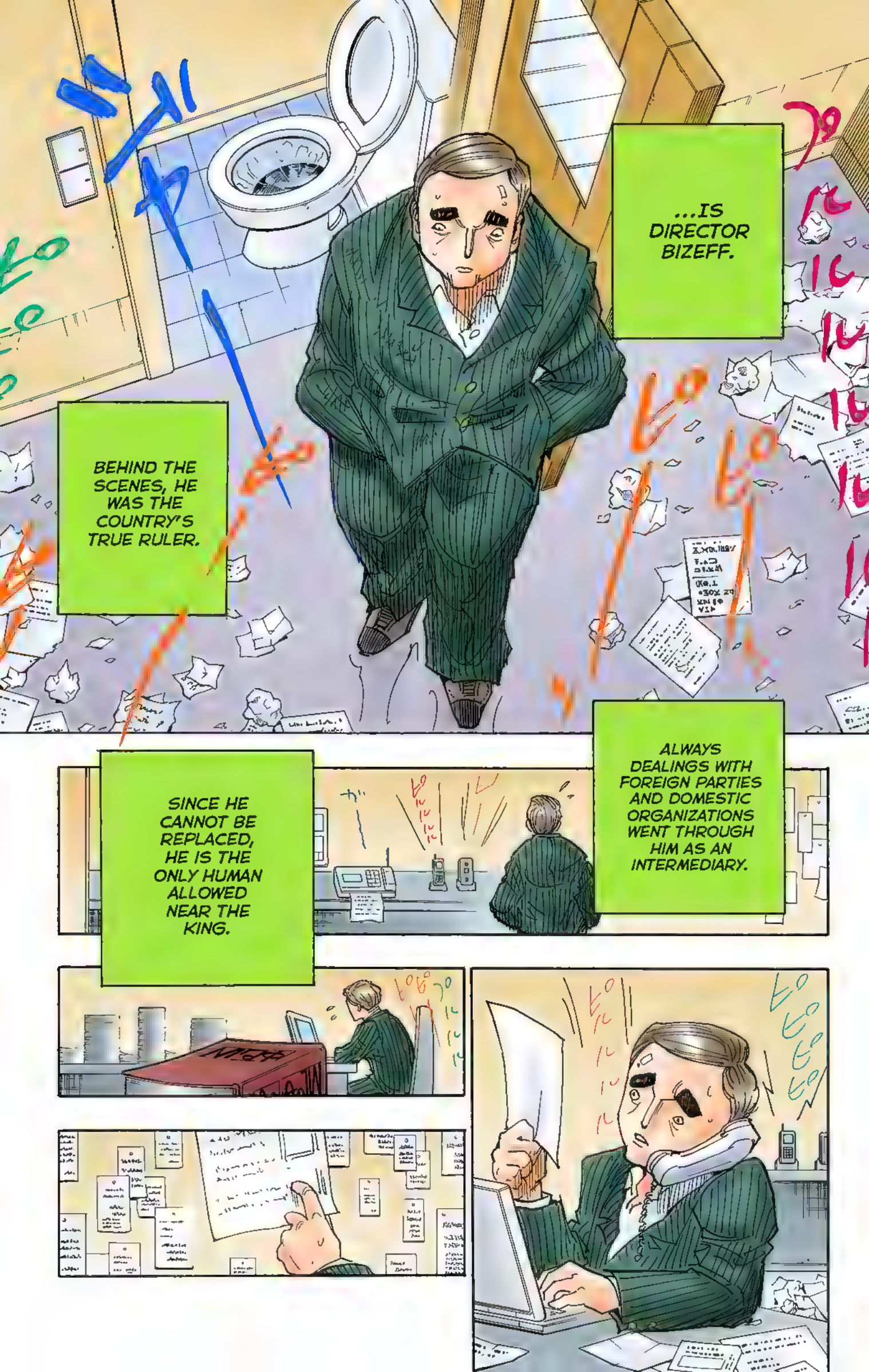
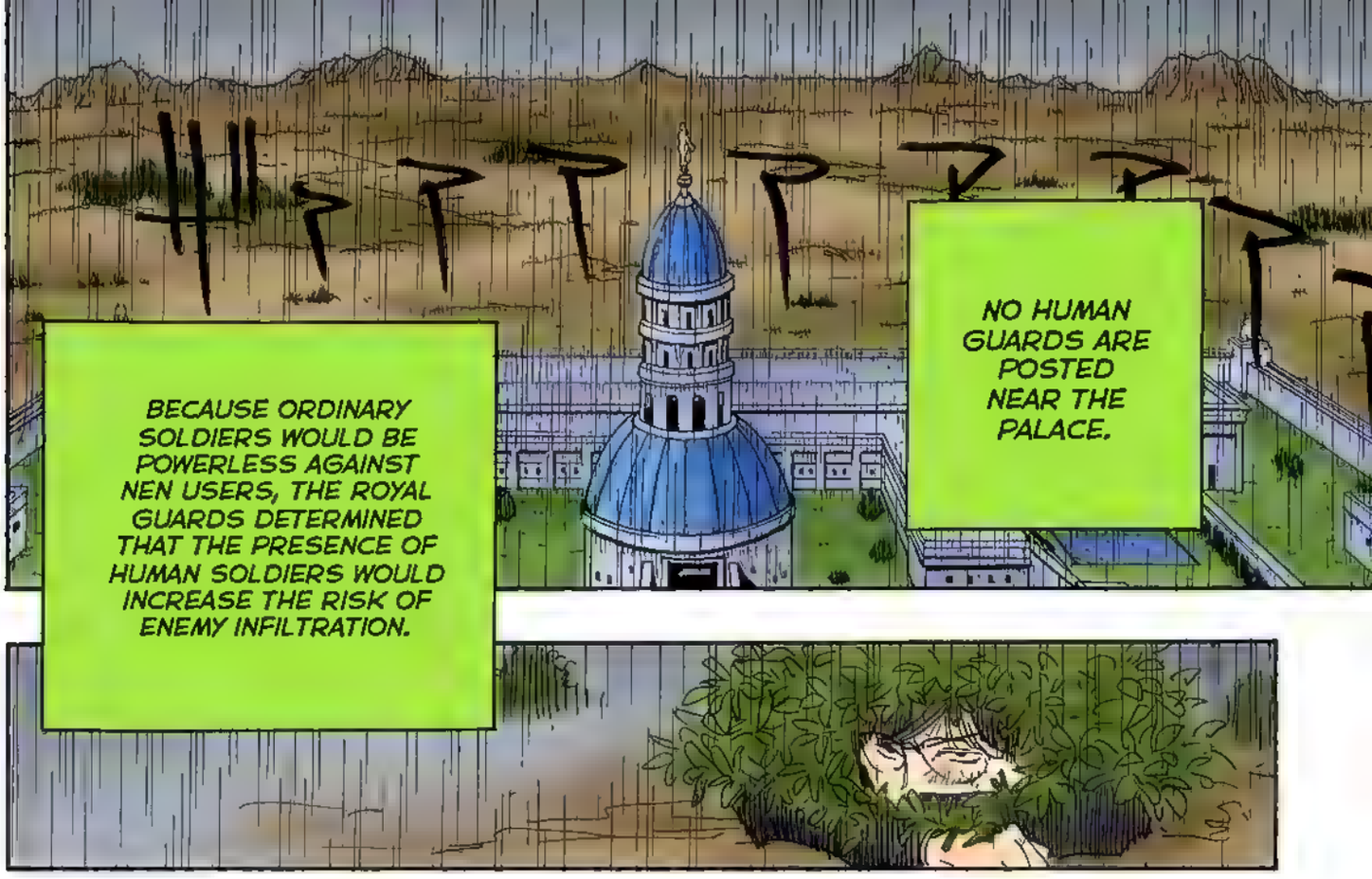
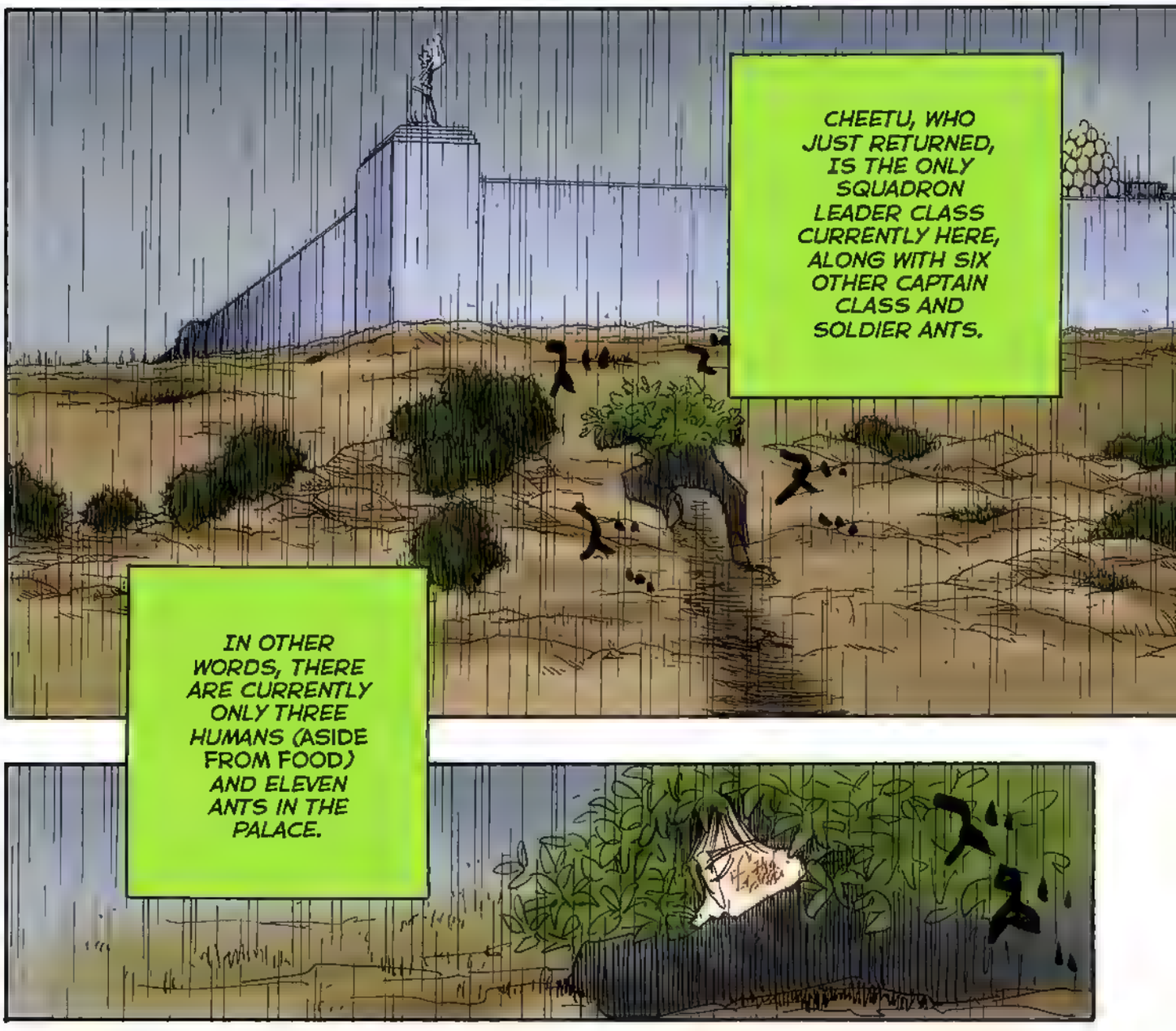

CURRENTLY IN THE PALACE, THERE ARE THREE HUMANS NOT INTENDED AS "FOOD".
THE FIRST IS THE GUNGI PLAYER GIRL AND THE SECOND IS DIEGO.


AND THE THIRD...


...IS DIRECTOR BIZEFF.
BEHIND THE SCENES, HE WAS THE COUNTRY'S TRUE RULER.
ALWAYS DEALINGS WITH FOREIGN PARTIES AND DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS WENT THROUGH HIM AS AN INTERMEDIARY.
SINCE HE CANNOT BE REPLACED, HE IS THE ONLY HUMAN ALLOWED NEAR THE KING.


BECAUSE ORDINARY SOLDIERS WOULD BE POWERLESS AGAINST NEN USERS, THE ROYAL GUARDS DETERMINED THAT THE PRESENCE OF HUMAN SOLDIERS WOULD INCREASE THE RISK OF ENEMY INFILTRATION.
NO HUMAN GUARDS ARE POSTED NEAR THE PALACE.


CHEETU, WHO JUST RETURNED, IS THE ONLY SQUADRON LEADER CLASS CURRENTLY HERE, ALONG WITH SIX OTHER CAPTAIN CLASS AND SOLDIER ANTS.
IN OTHER WORDS, THERE ARE CURRENTLY ONLY THREE HUMANS (ASIDE FROM FOOD) AND ELEVEN ANTS IN THE PALACE.

THE SOLDIER ANTS ARE THE VARIOUS SQUADRON LEADERS' PERSONAL FAVORITES, AND HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH GUARDING THE KING.
THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY STRICT LOYALTY BETWEEN THE KING AND THE SQUADRON LEADERS. THEY WORK TOGETHER SIMPLY BECAUSE THEIR GOALS ALIGN.
THEREFORE, LOOKOUT DUTY WOULD NEVER BE LEFT TO THE OTHERS.
UNDERSTANDING THIS, PITOU AND THE ROYAL GUARDS HAVE DELEGATED DUTIES TO THOSE CHIMERA ANTS, TASKS THAT ARE INCONSEQUENTIAL AND EXPECTED TO END IN FAILURE.
KNOV HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING THIS, BUT AS HE ATTEMPTS TO INFILTRATE THE PALACE...
RIGHT NOW IS THE BEST AND LAST TIME FOR HIM TO SNEAK IN.

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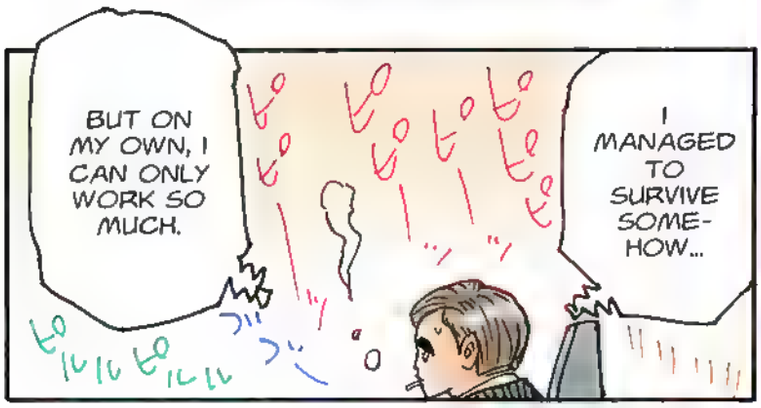
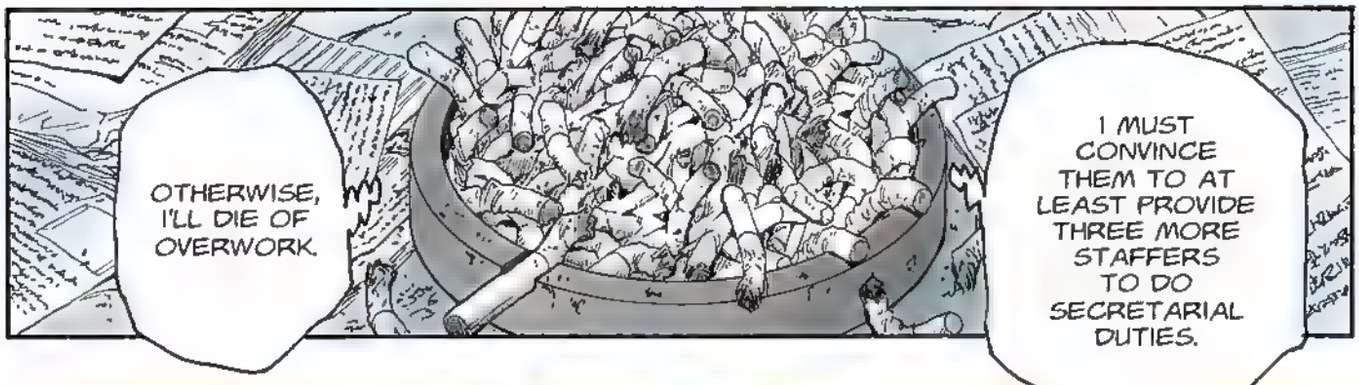
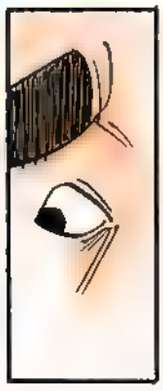
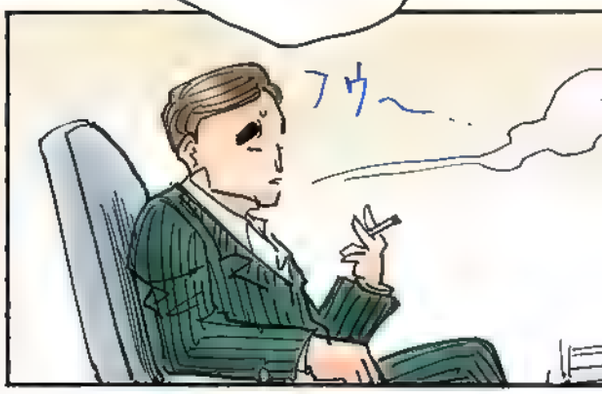
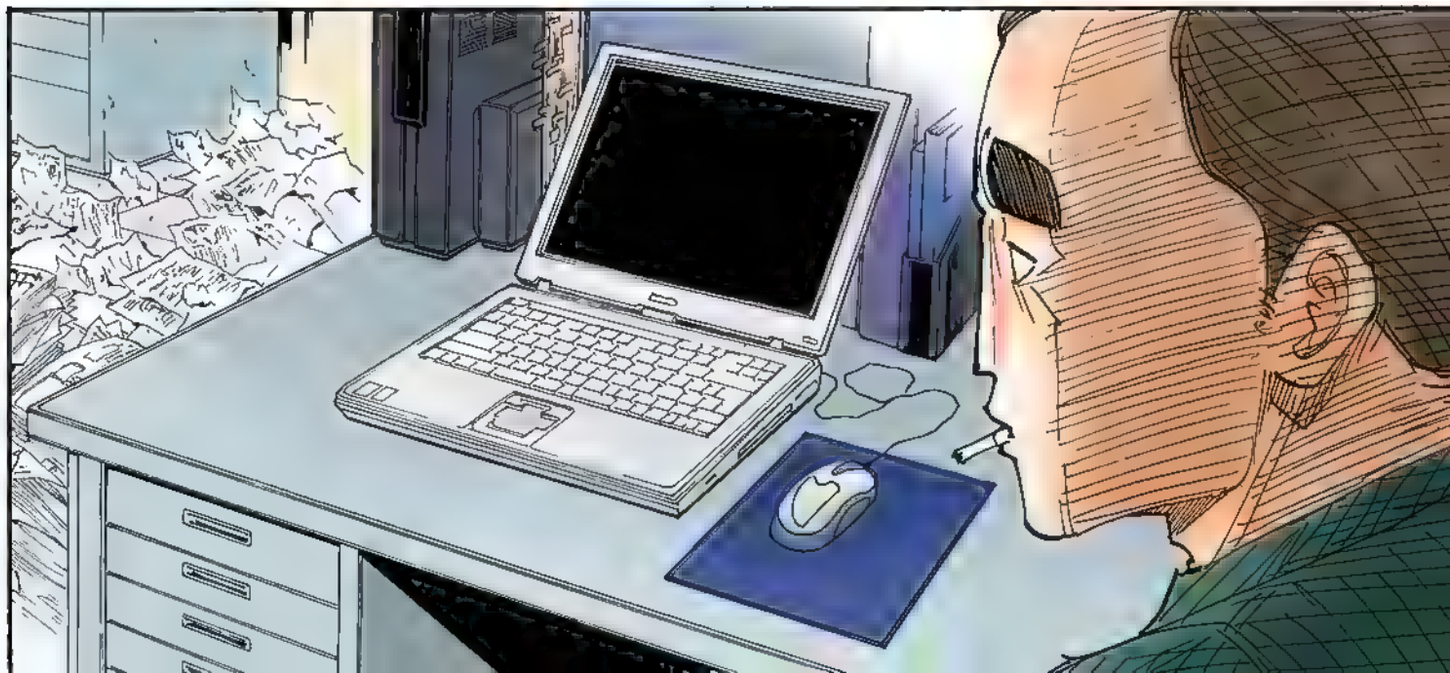
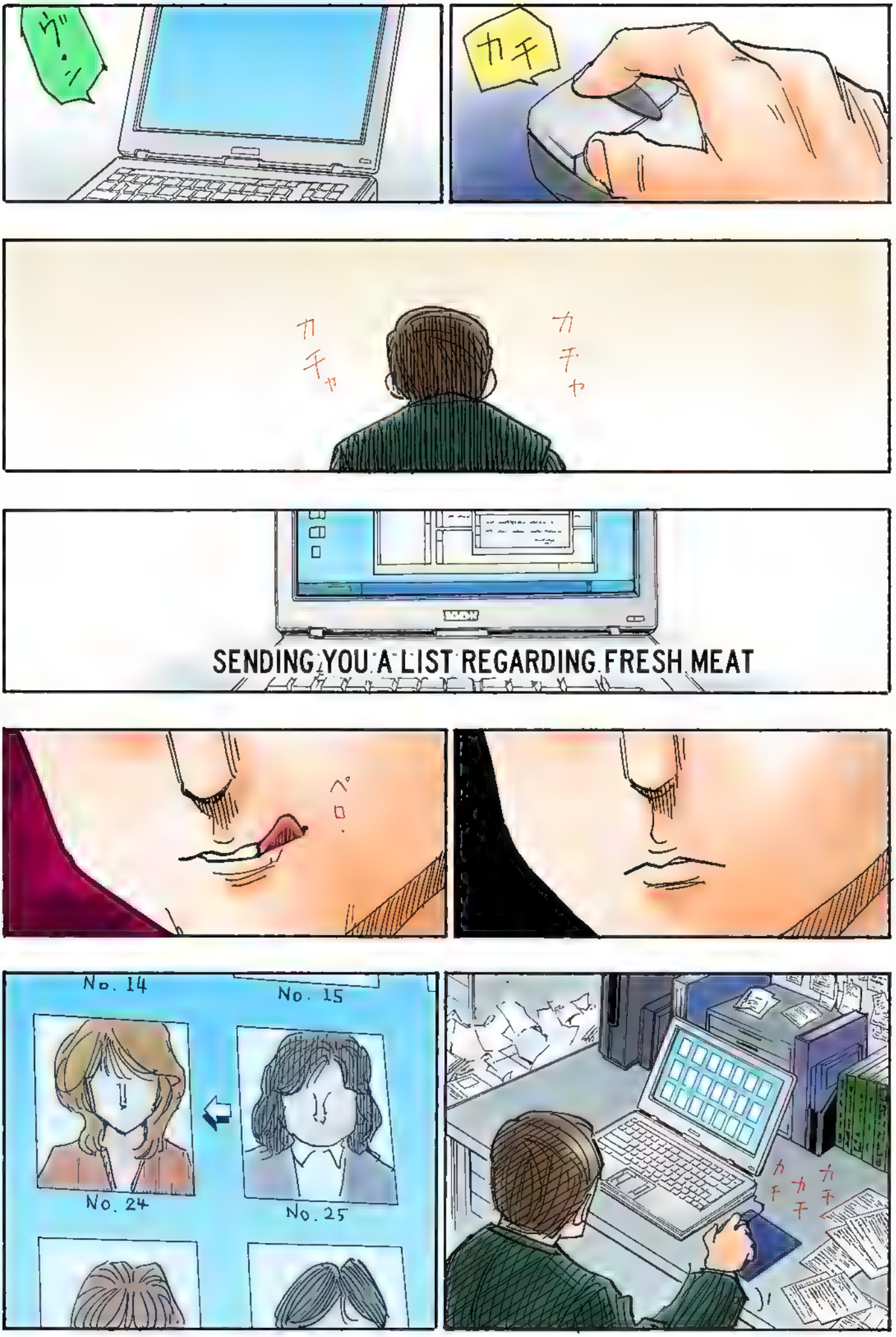

BUT ON MY OWN, I CAN ONLY WORK SO MUCH.
I MANAGED TO SURVIVE SOME-HOW...


OTHERWISE, I'LL DIE OF OVERWORK.
I MUST CONVINCE THEM TO AT LEAST PROVIDE THREE MORE STAFFERS TO DO SECRETARIAL DUTIES.





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SENDING YOU A LIST REGARDING FRESH MEAT
ペロ
No. 14
No. 15
No. 24
No. 25
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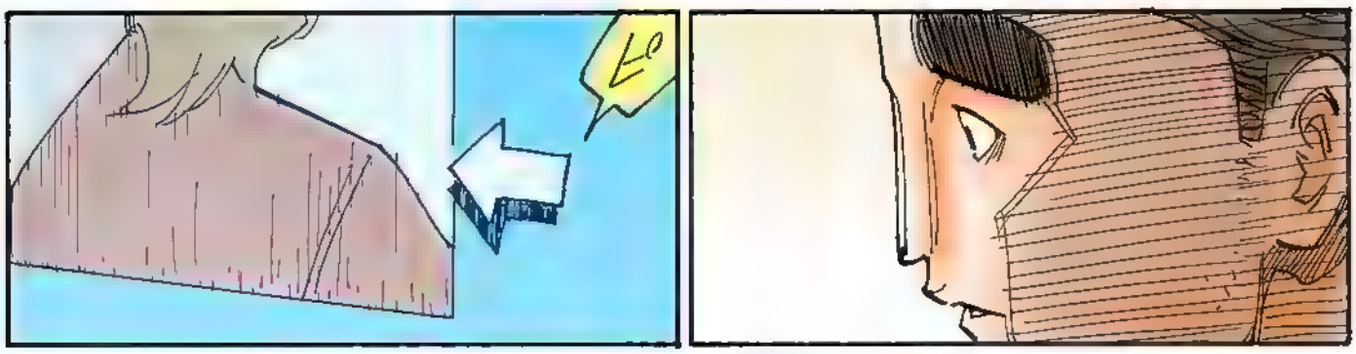
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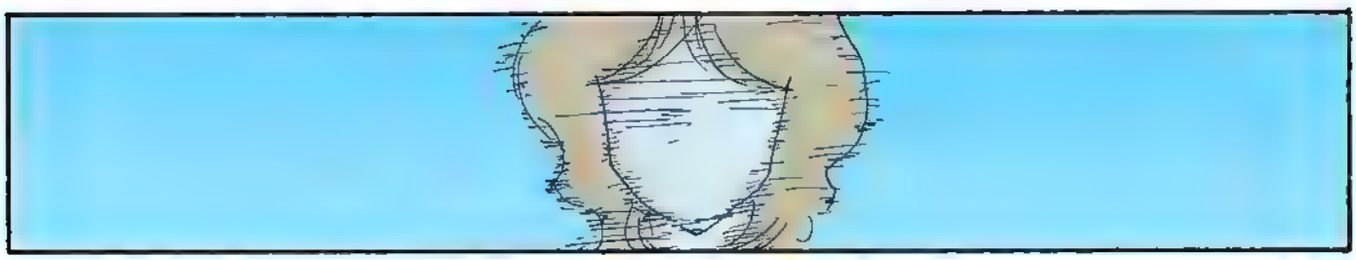

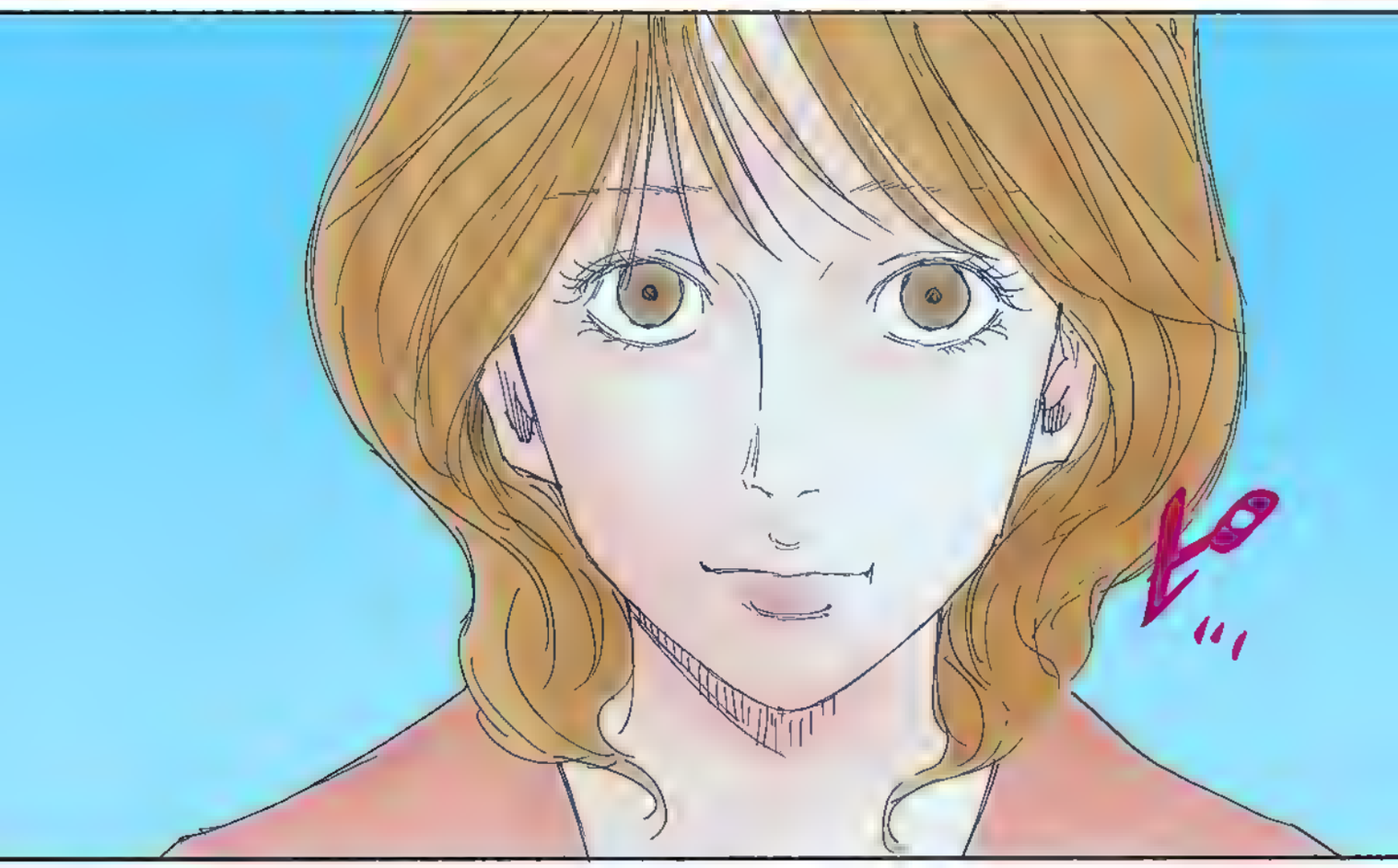
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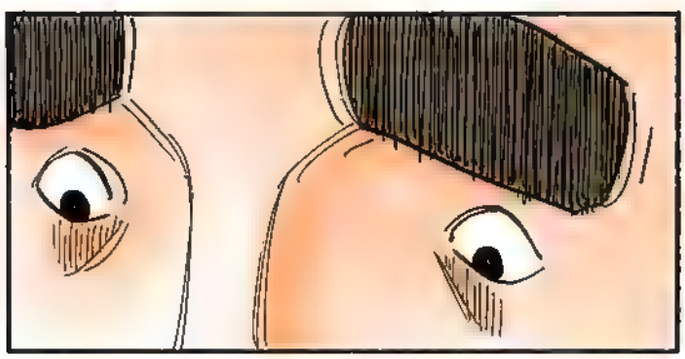
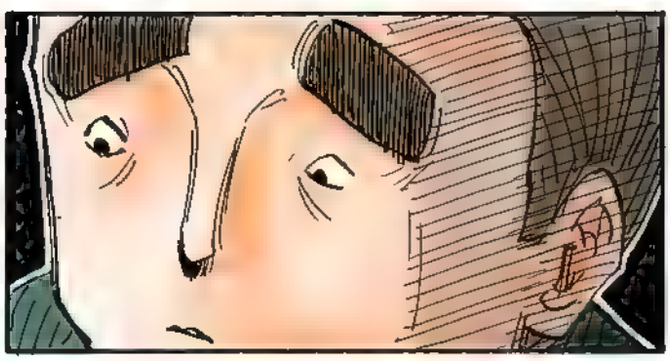
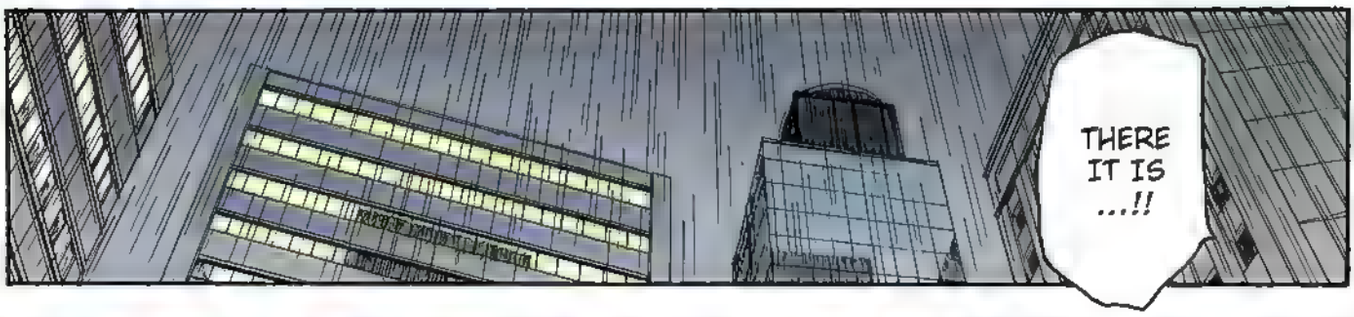




REQUESTED NUMBERS:
2, 16, 79, 103, 119.

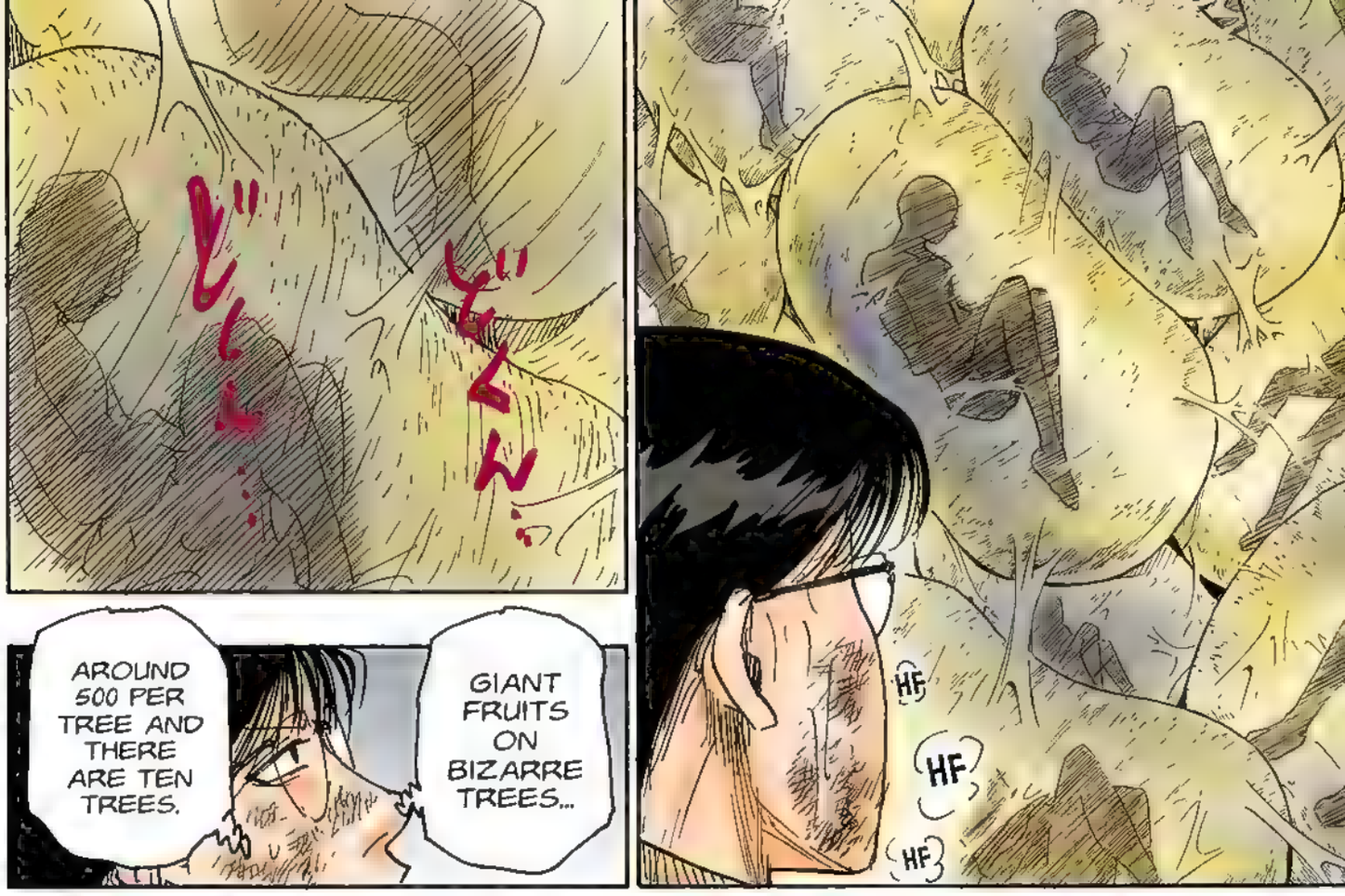
AS ARRANGED.



WE GOT A NIBBLE...

PALM.

ザァァァァァ
No.251 ◆ 6 : PART ⑧
I'M FINALLY HERE!!
IN THE GARDEN GROUNDS ...!!
...IT'S STILL OVER 100 METERS AWAY...!!
HF
HF
THE CENTRAL STAIR-CASE...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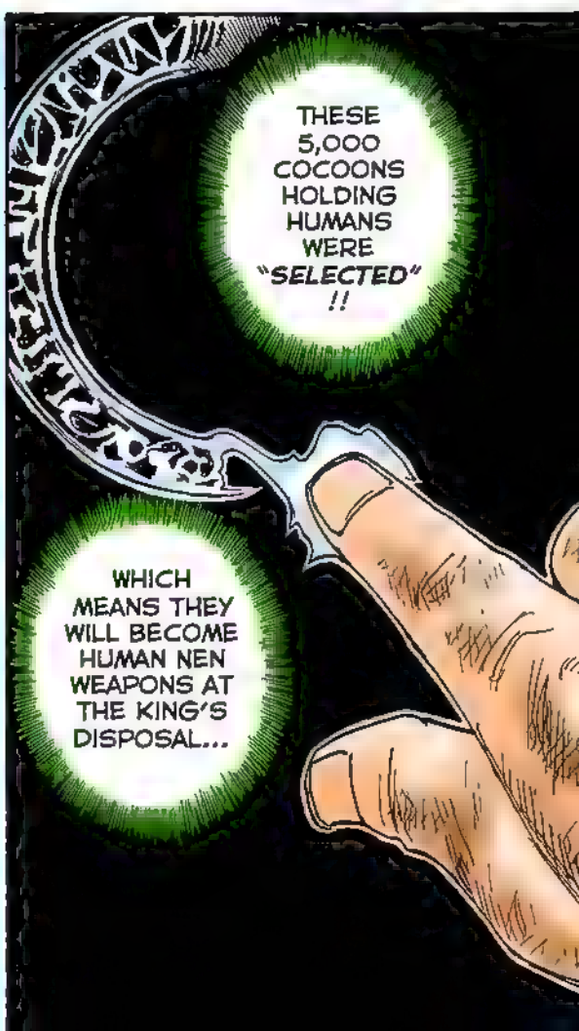
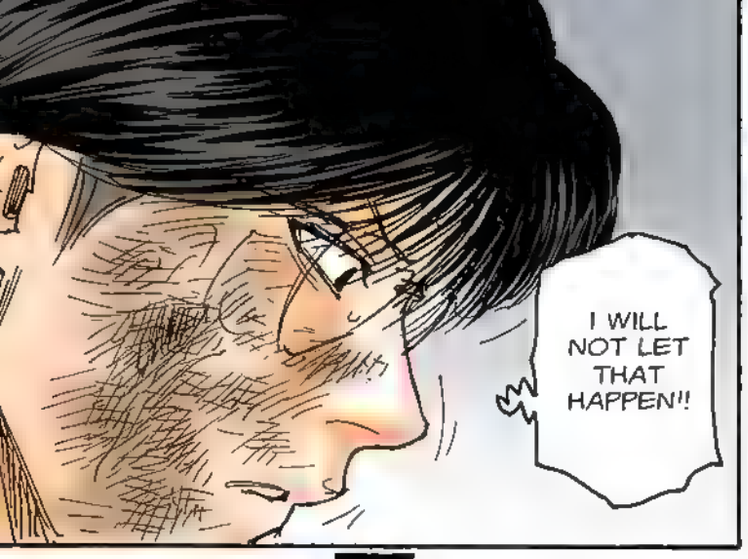
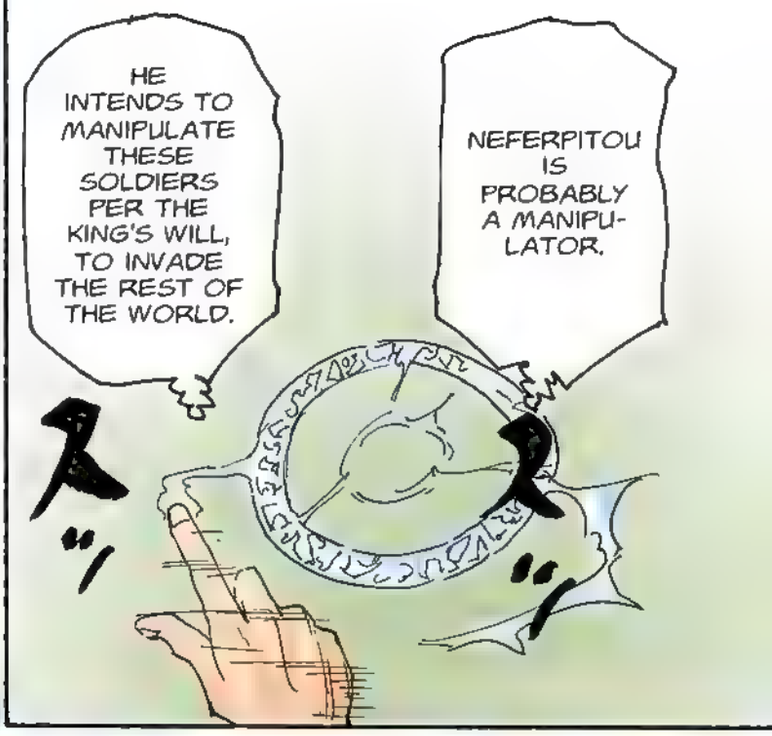
AROUND 500 PER TREE AND THERE ARE TEN TREES.
GIANT FRUITS ON BIZARRE TREES...
HF
HF
HF

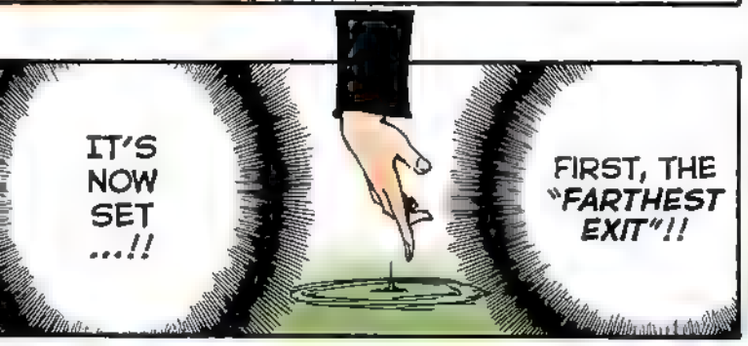
KILLUA'S INTERFERENCE MEANT IT WAS CARRIED OUT FOR ONE DAY... SO IT ALL ADDS UP!
?...
500,000 PEOPLE TO UNDERGO THE "SORTING" PROCESS EACH DAY, WITH A 1% SURVIVAL RATE...!

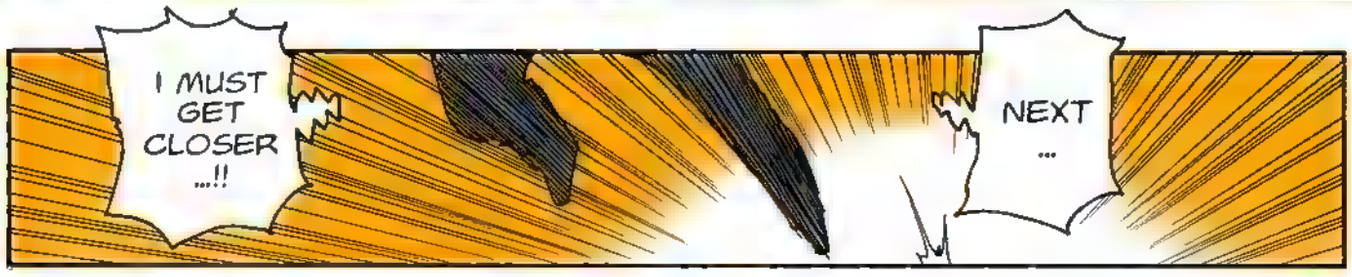
...AND ATTACK MANKIND AS THE KING'S PAWNS!!


THESE 5,000 COCOONS HOLDING HUMANS WERE "SELECTED" !!
WHICH MEANS THEY WILL BECOME HUMAN NEN WEAPONS AT THE KING'S DISPOSAL...

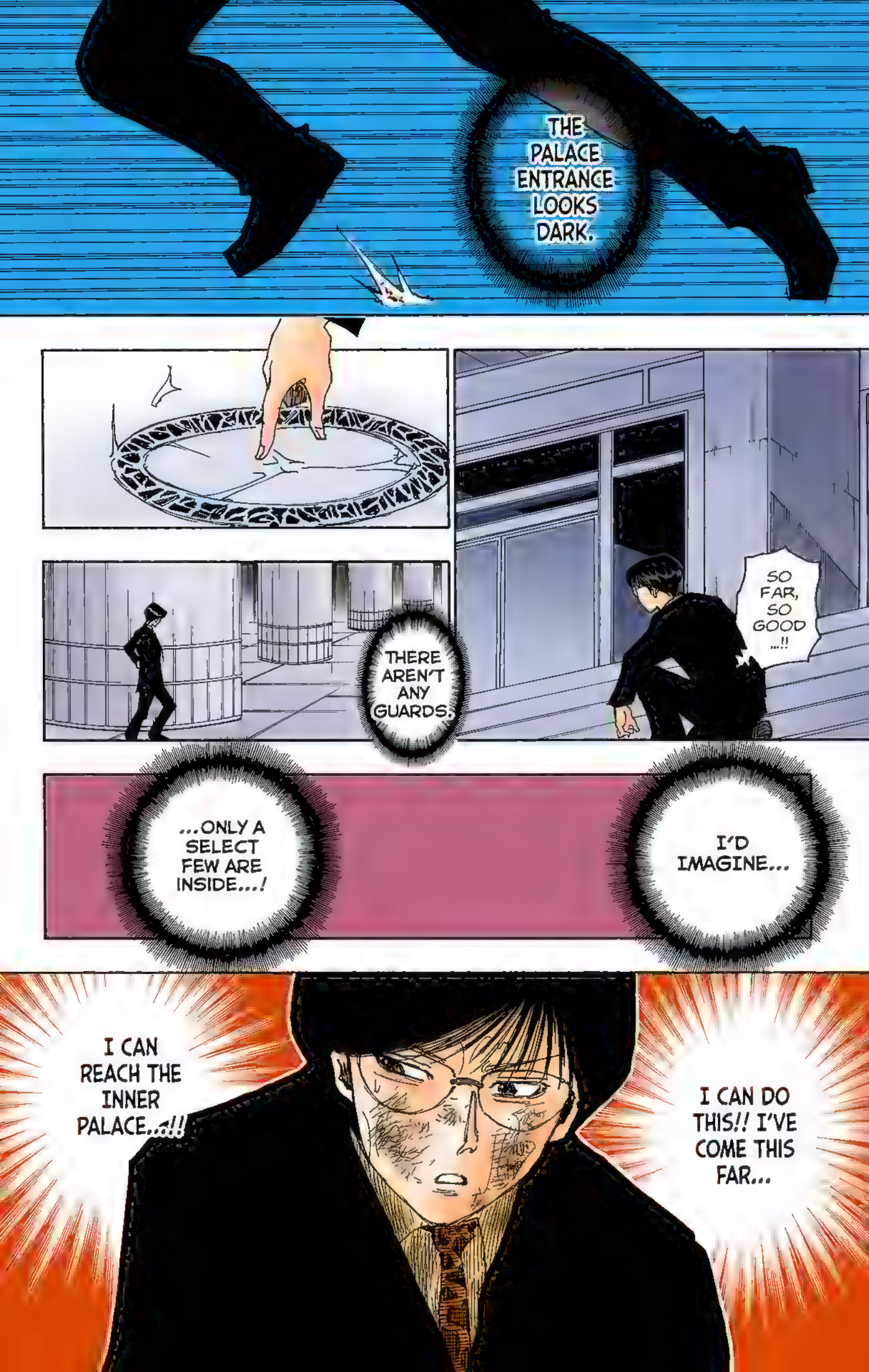


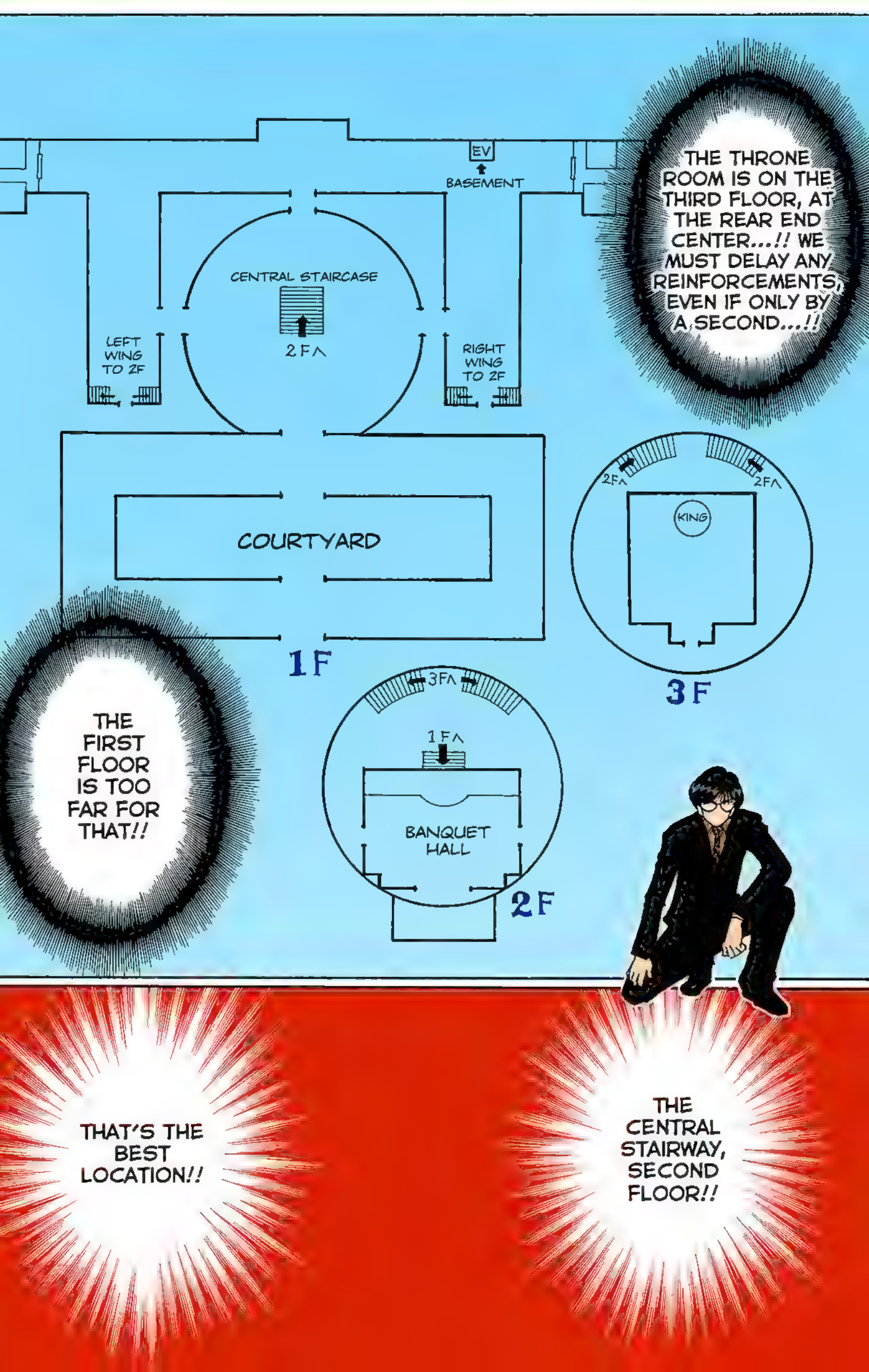


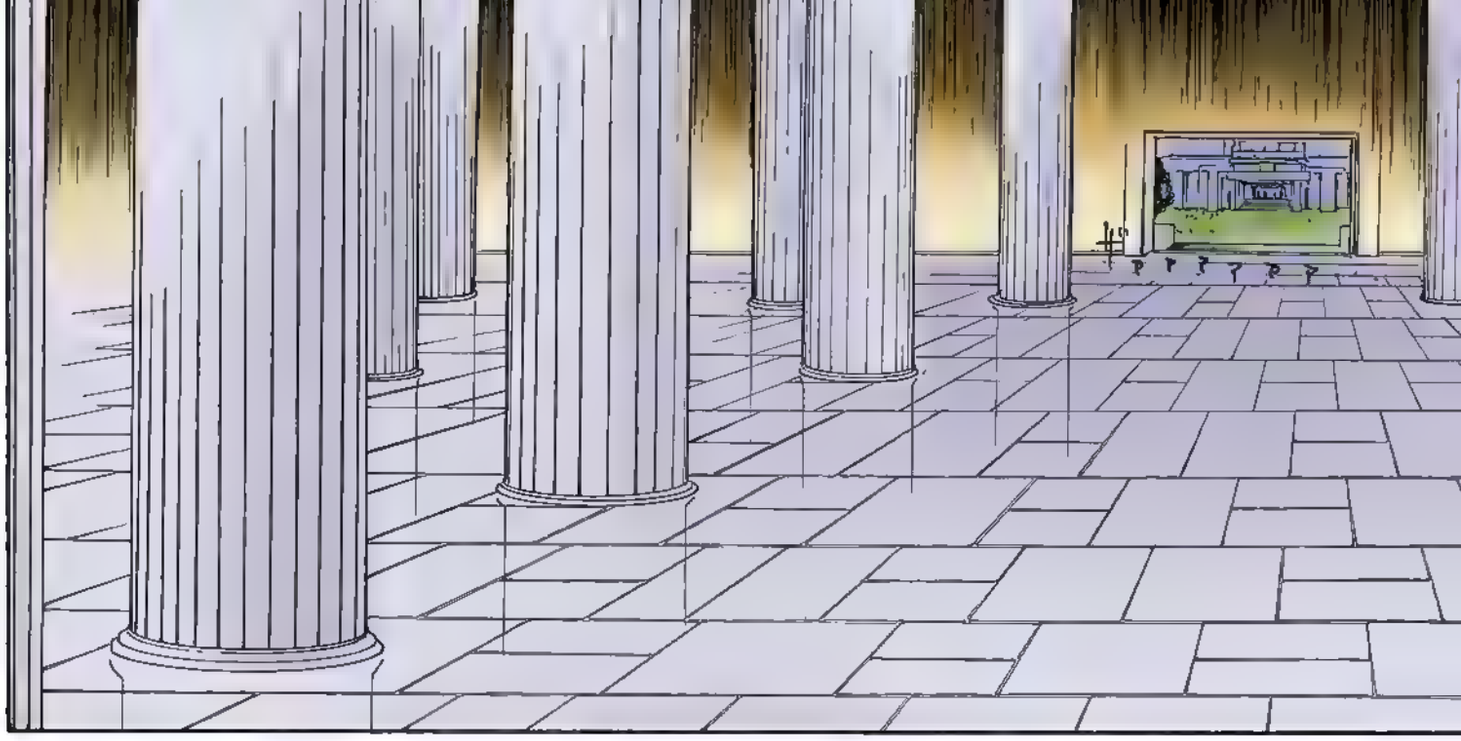


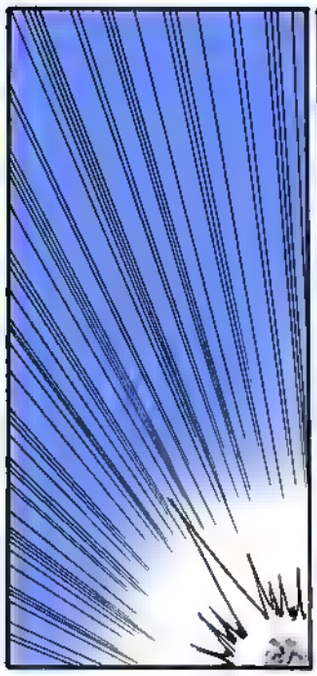


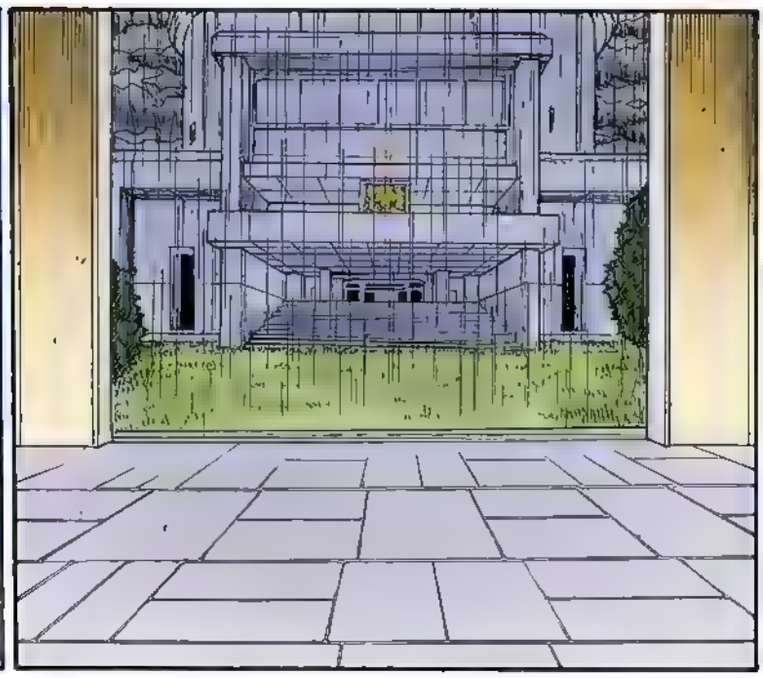
THE INSIDE OF THE ENTRANCE PALACE...!!

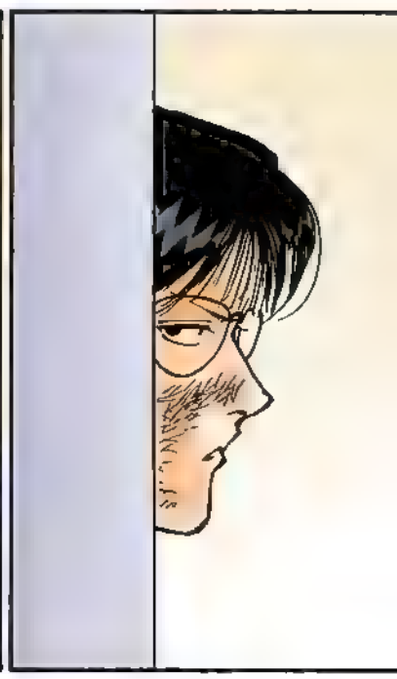

THE PALACE ENTRANCE LOOKS DARK.
SO FAR, SO GOOD ...!!
THERE AREN'T ANY GUARDS.
...ONLY A SELECT FEW ARE INSIDE...!
I'D IMAGINE...
I CAN REACH THE INNER PALACE...!!
I CAN DO THIS!! I'VE COME THIS FAR...

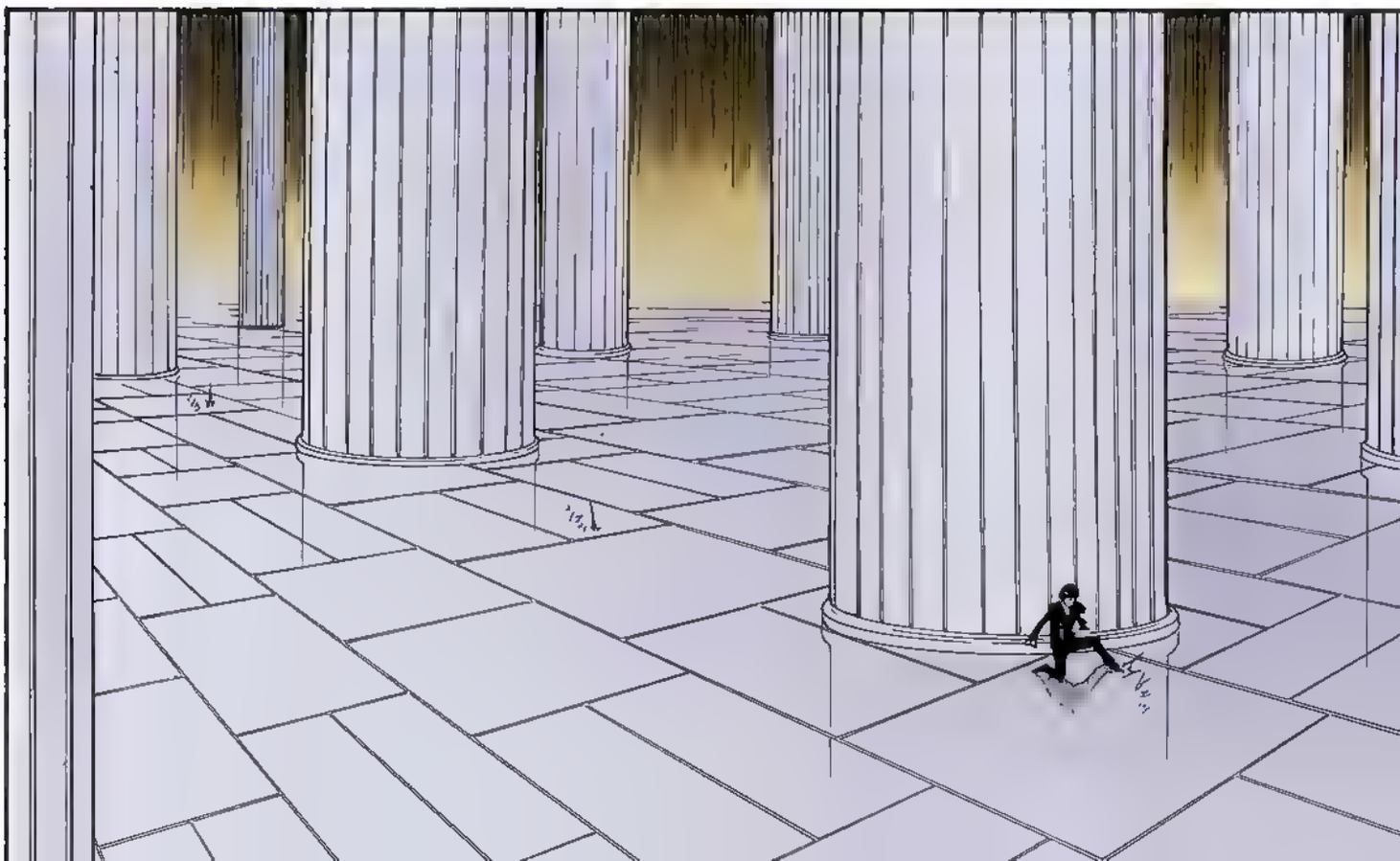

EV
BASEMENT
CENTRAL STAIRCASE
2F
LEFT WING TO 2F
RIGHT WING TO 2F
COURTYARD
1F
THE THRONE ROOM IS ON THE THIRD FLOOR, AT THE REAR END CENTER...!! WE MUST DELAY ANY REINFORCEMENTS, EVEN IF ONLY BY A SECOND...!!
2F
2F
KING
3F
THE FIRST FLOOR IS TOO FAR FOR THAT!!
3F
1F
BANQUET HALL
2F
THAT'S THE BEST LOCATION!!
THE CENTRAL STAIRWAY, SECOND FLOOR!!

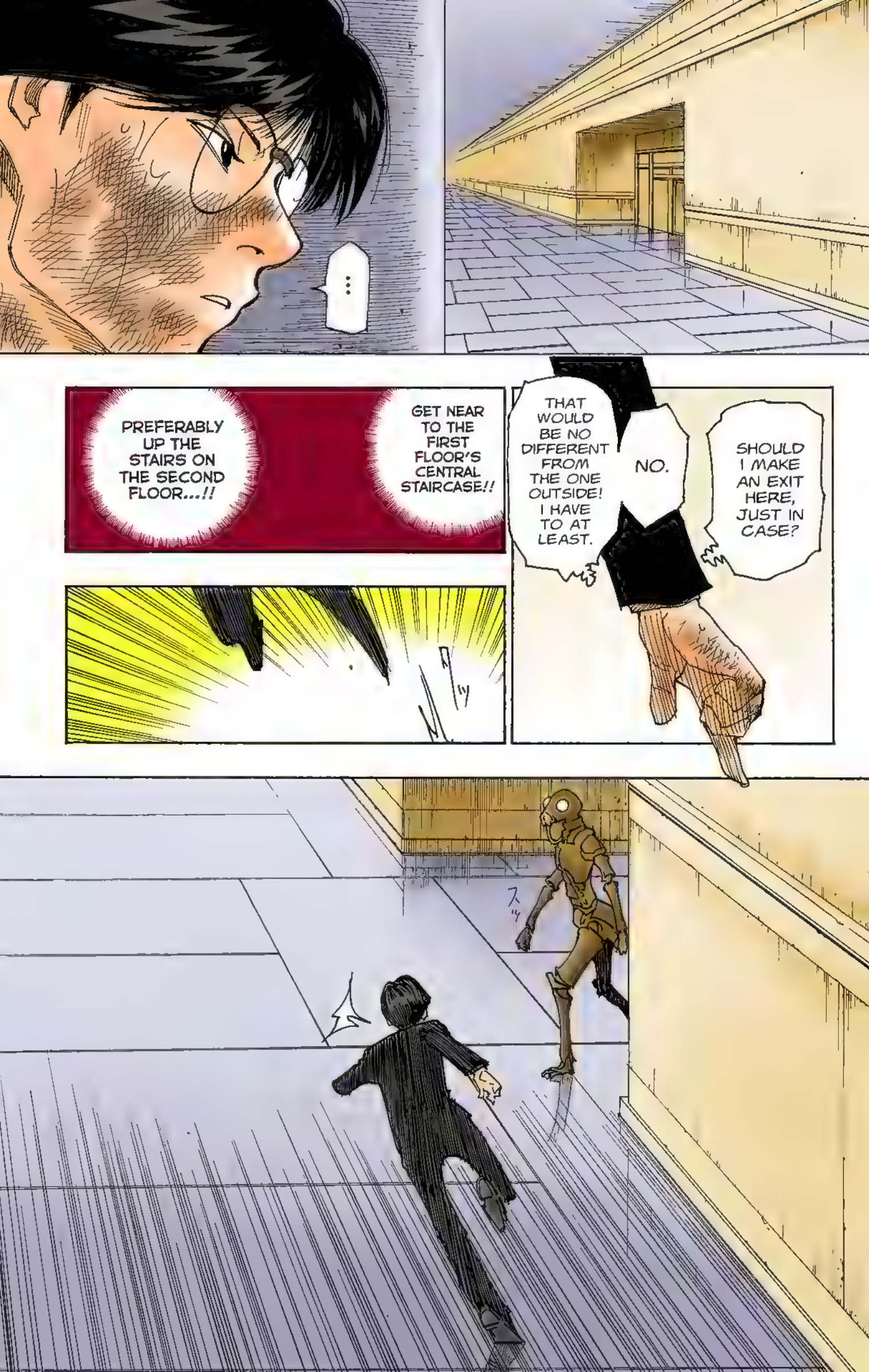






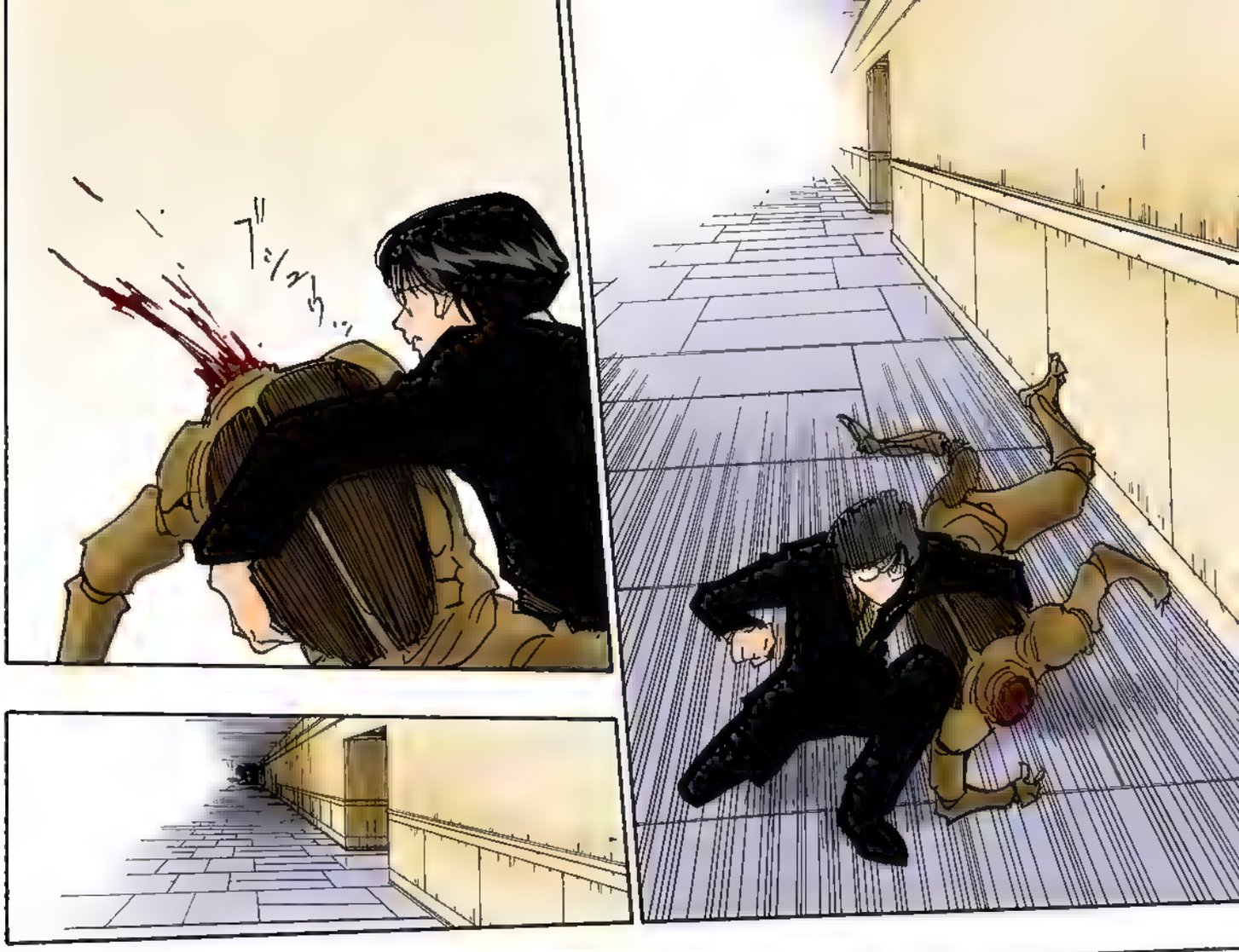


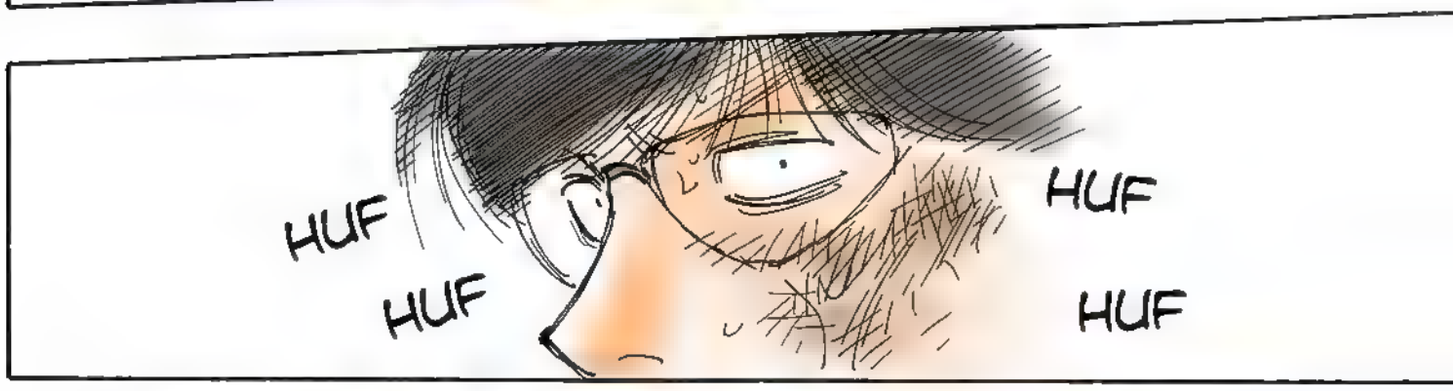


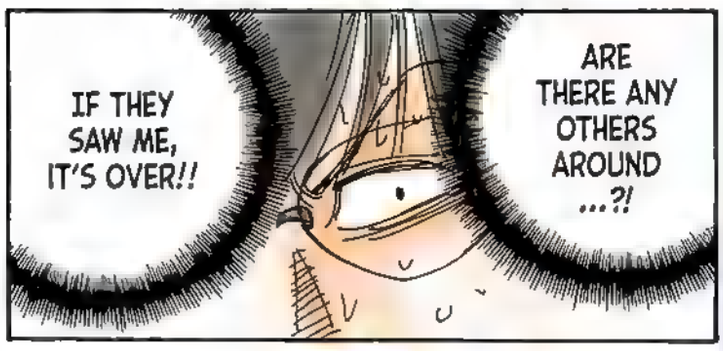

...
PREFERABLY UP THE STAIRS ON THE SECOND FLOOR...!!
GET NEAR TO THE FIRST FLOOR'S CENTRAL STAIRCASE!!
THAT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE OUTSIDE! I HAVE TO AT LEAST.
NO.
SHOULD I MAKE AN EXIT HERE, JUST IN CASE?

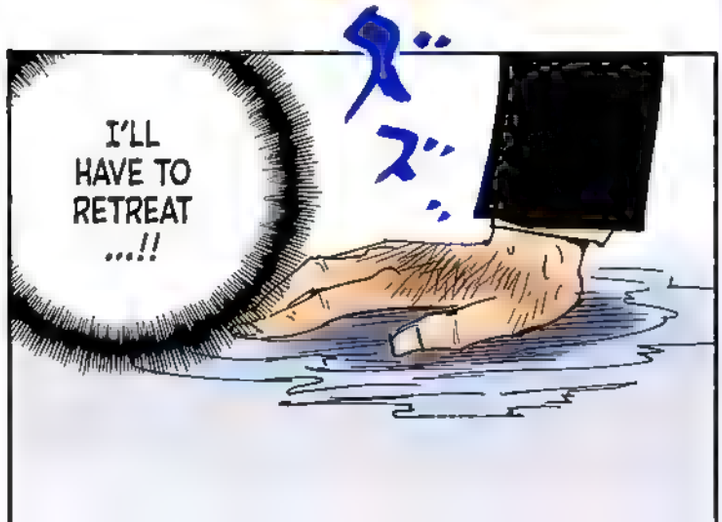
"WINDOW TO THE VOID: SCREAM"

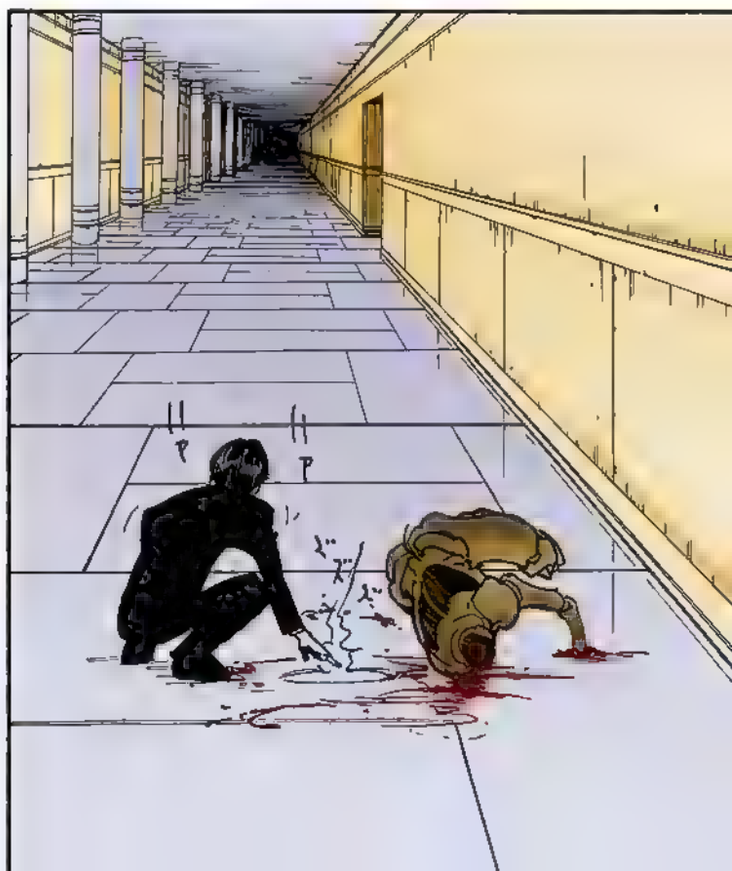
CLOSE!!



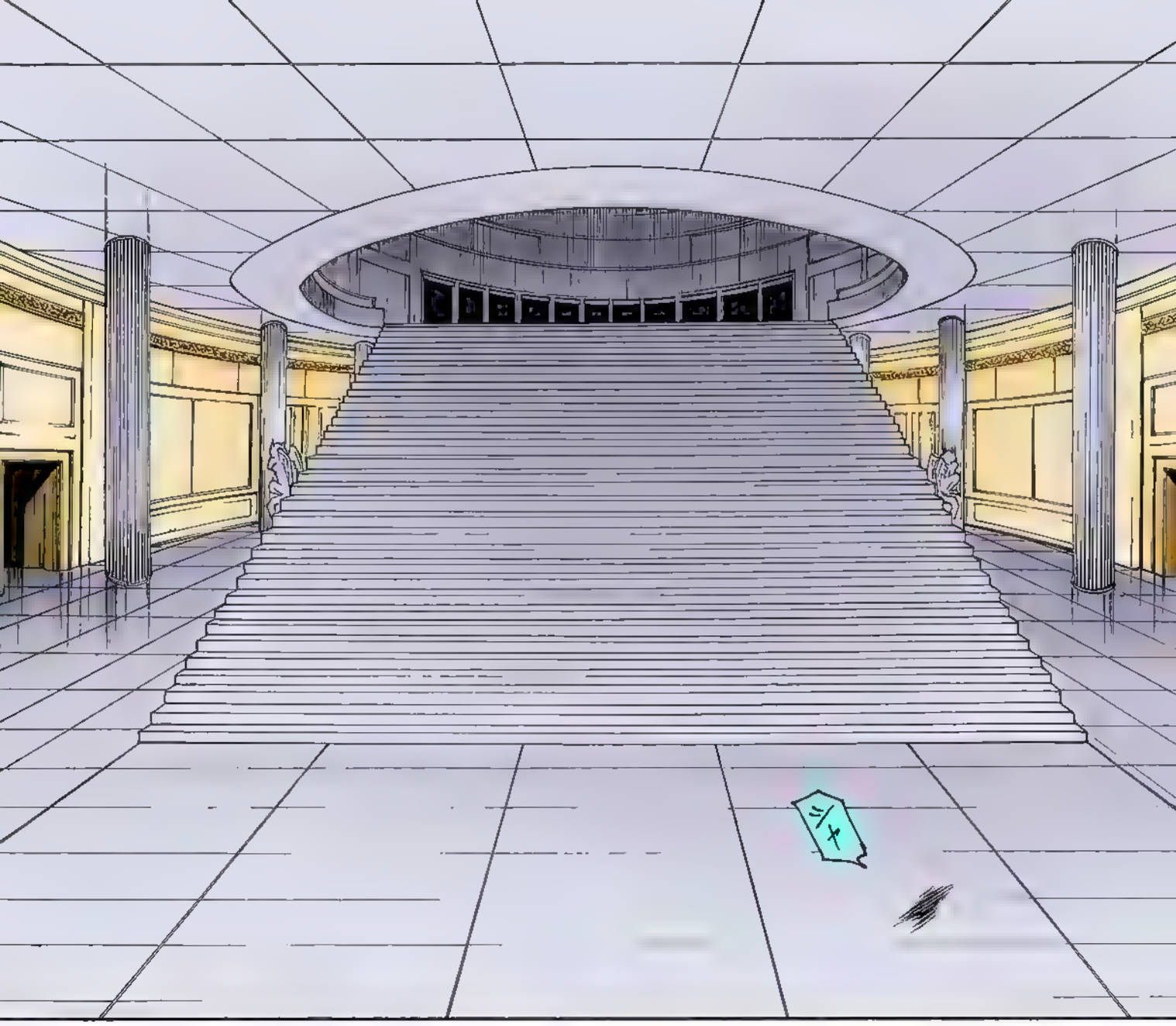

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

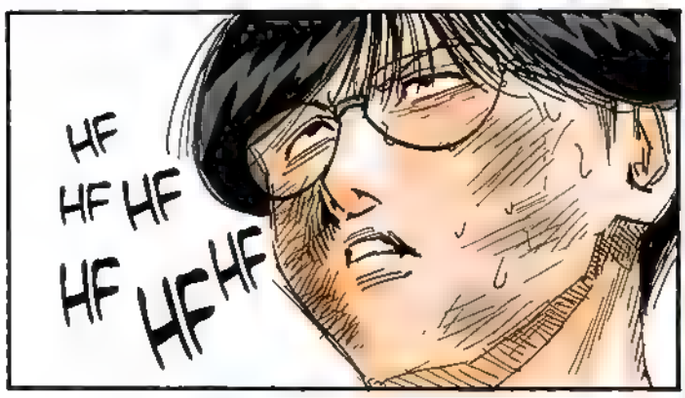

IF THEY SAW ME, IT'S OVER!!
ARE THERE ANY OTHERS AROUND ...?!

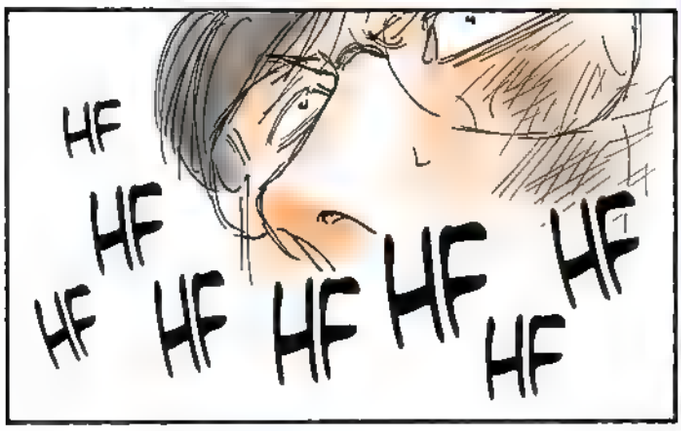

I'LL HAVE TO RETREAT ...!!

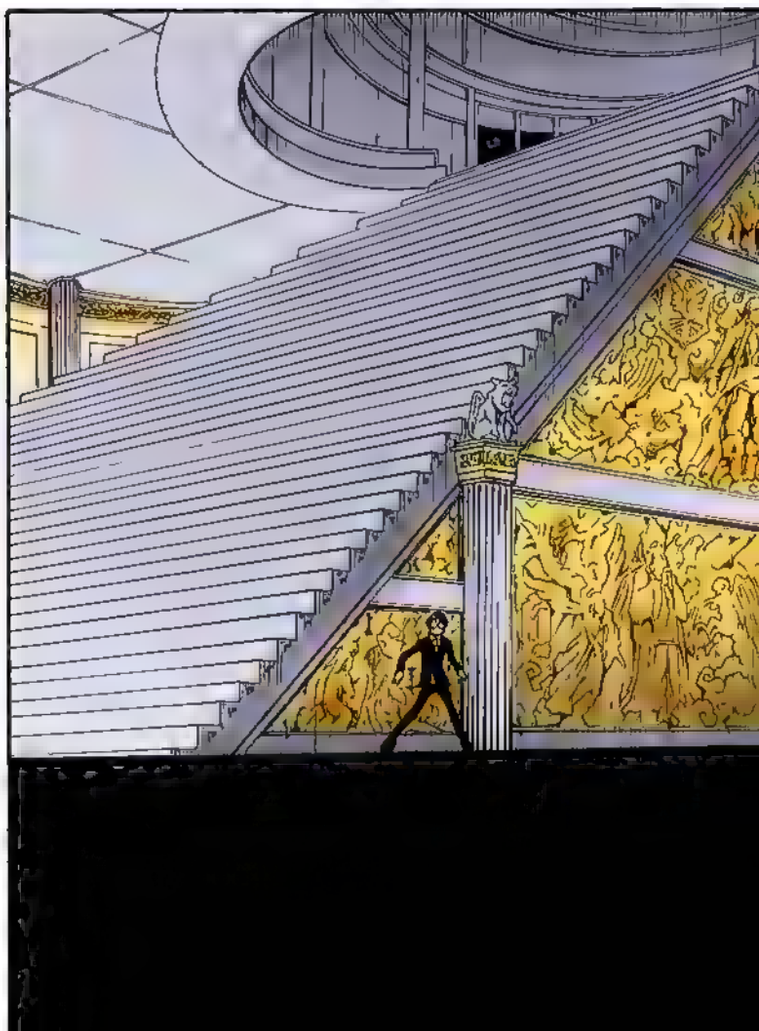


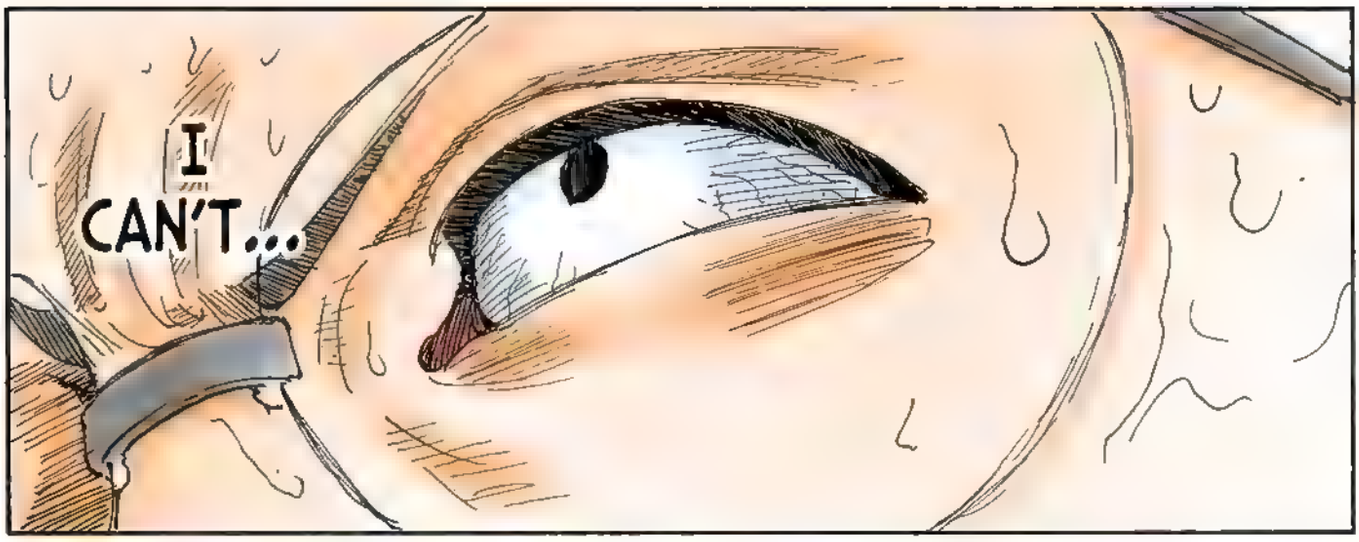
SO HE WAS ALL ALONE...
PHEW
NOBODY'S COMING ...
ズル
ズズ
チッ
ズル
ス…




HF
HF HF
HF HF HF


HF
HF
HF HF HF HF HF
HF



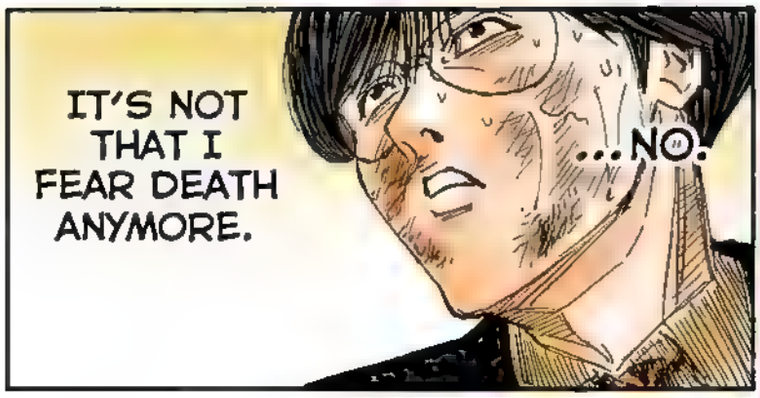


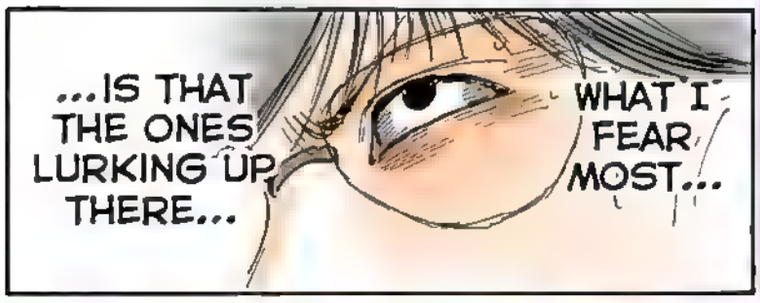
...PAST THIS POINT!!

I CAN'T MOVE...

THEY'LL KILL ME.

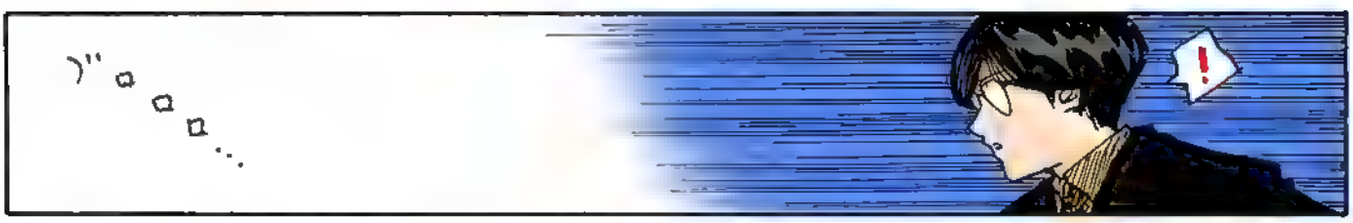
IF I DO...

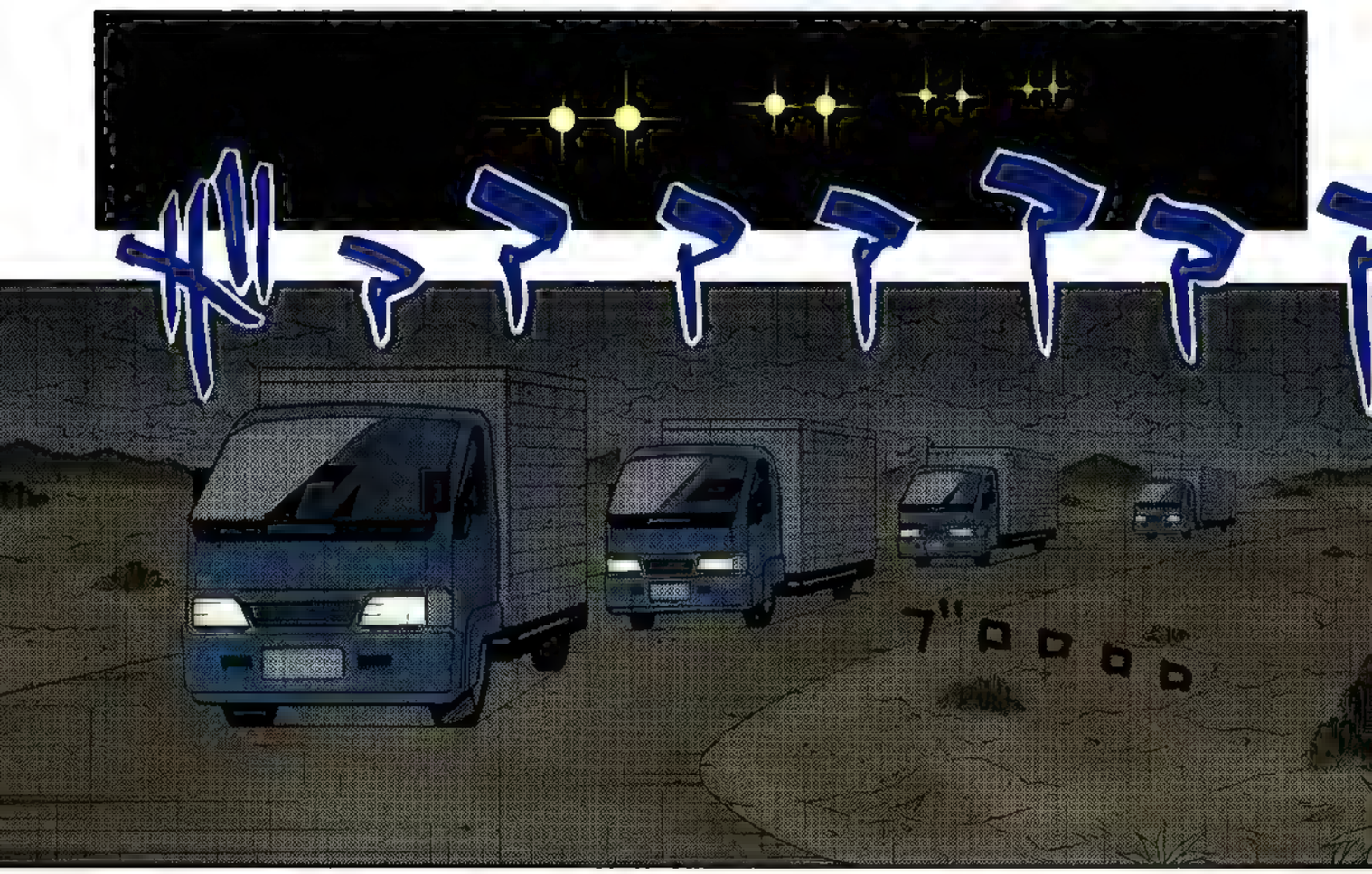


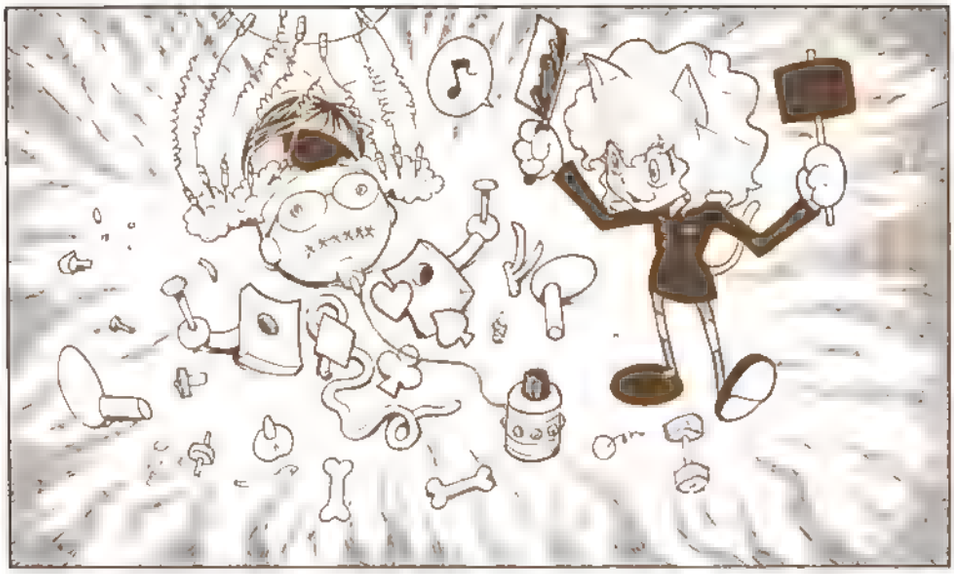


THIS THICK AURA'S STRENGTH JUST CONFIRMS IT...!!

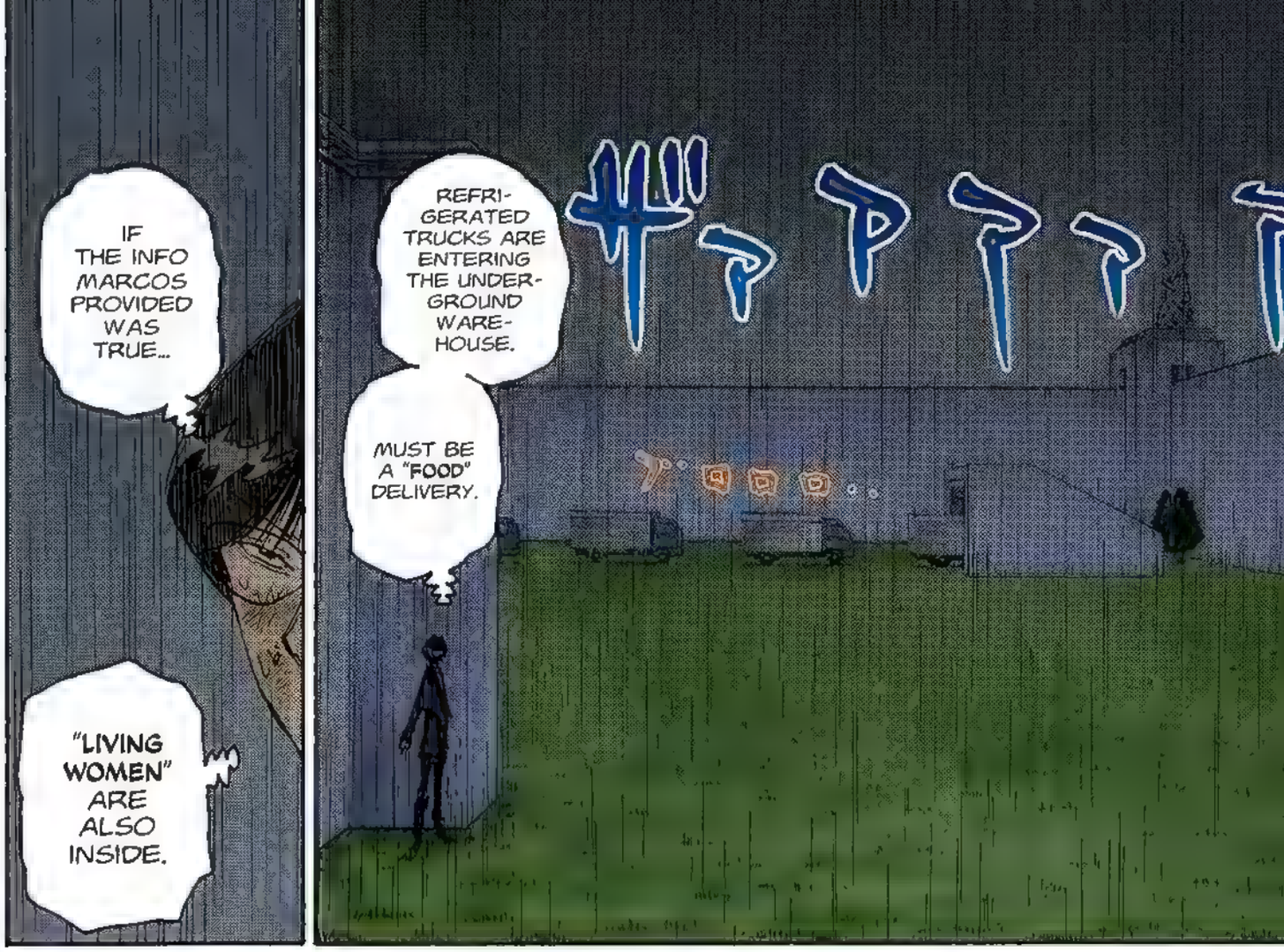
IF I'M CAUGHT, I WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST...!!

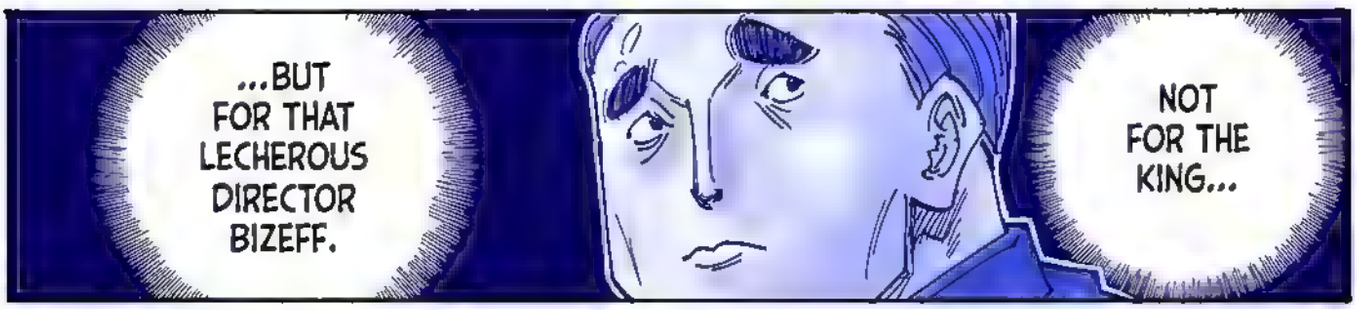






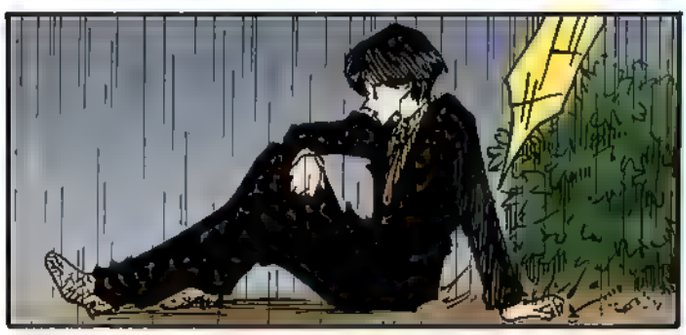
AS ARRANGED.
YES.
YOU'VE GOT THE "MEAT"?
No.252◆6: PART: ⑨

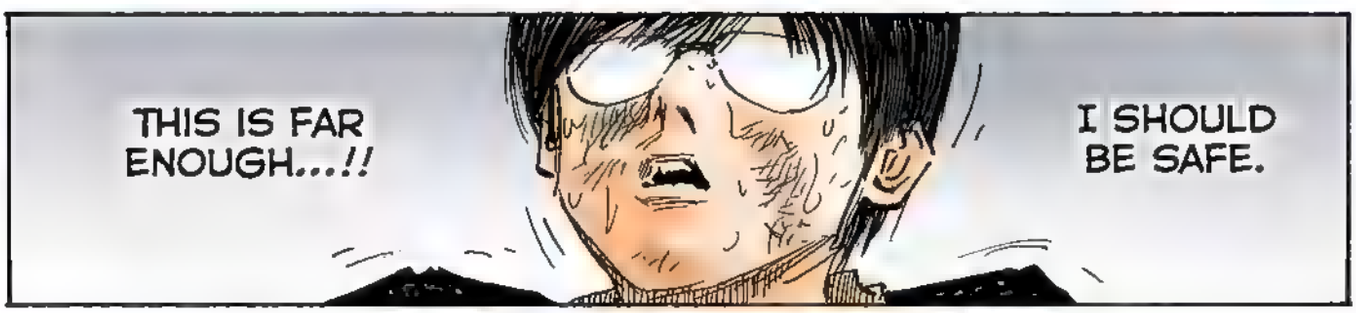

IF THE INFO MARCOS PROVIDED WAS TRUE...
"LIVING WOMEN" ARE ALSO INSIDE.
REFRI-GERATED TRUCKS ARE ENTERING THE UNDER-GROUND WARE-HOUSE.
MUST BE A "FOOD" DELIVERY.

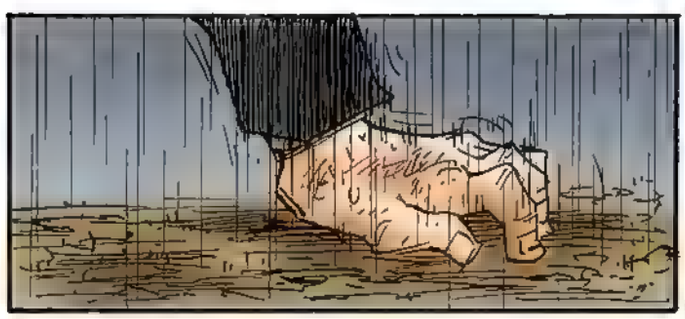

...BUT FOR THAT LECHEROUS DIRECTOR BIZEFF.
NOT FOR THE KING...

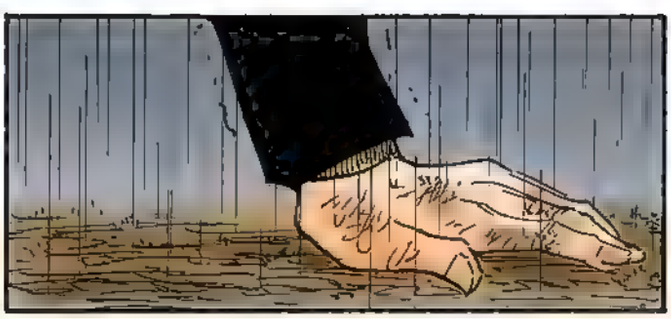
IF OUR STRATEGY WORKED...
...PALM IS AMONGST THEM...!!

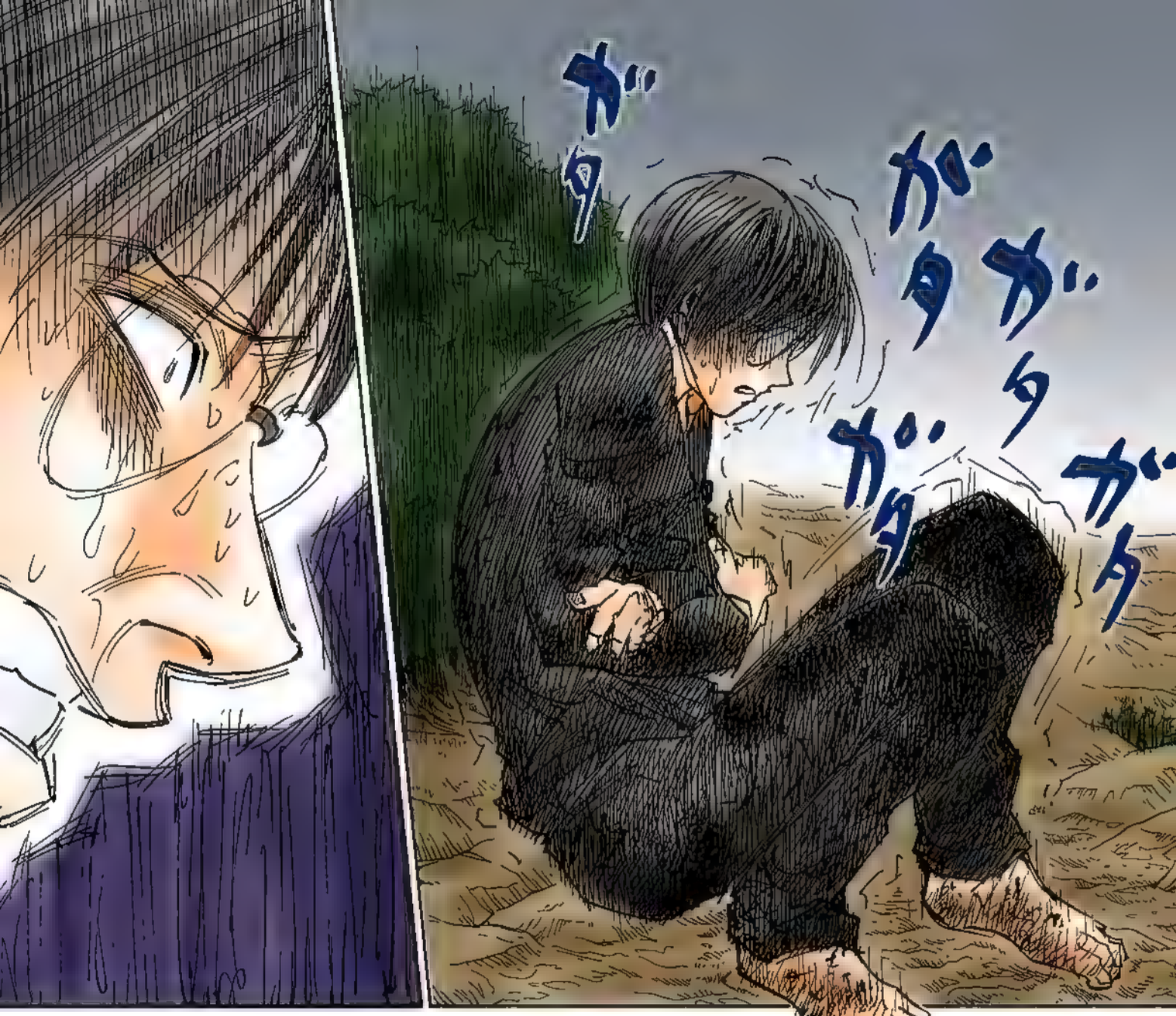
サァァァァァ




THIS IS FAR ENOUGH...!!
I SHOULD BE SAFE.







DON'T GET IN OVER YOUR HEAD...!

PALM ....!!

THAT... THAT VICIOUS AURA...

IF YOU GET CAUGHT, IT'S OVER!!

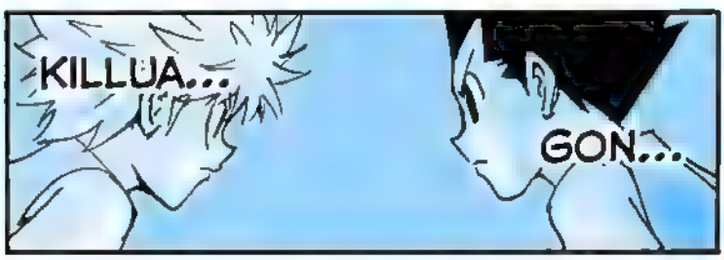
I...

SO EVEN IF YOUR MISSION DOESN'T SUCCEED, WE CAN STILL EXECUTE THE PLAN!!

I'VE MANAGED TO PLAN EACH "EXIT"...!!

...TO BREAK MY SPIRIT ...!!

ONE LOOK WAS ALL IT TOOK...

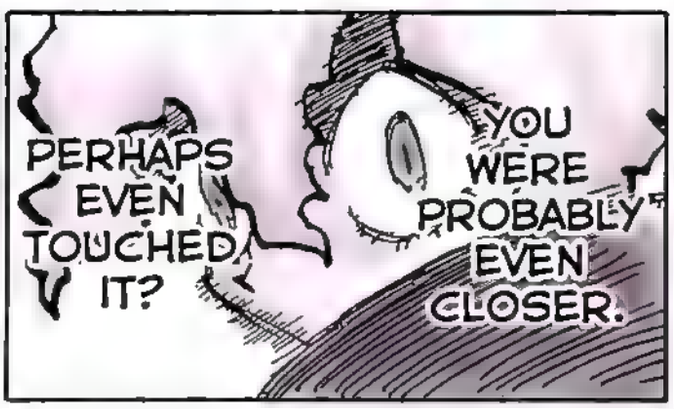


...HAVE SEEN ITS AURA TOO.

YOU BOTH...

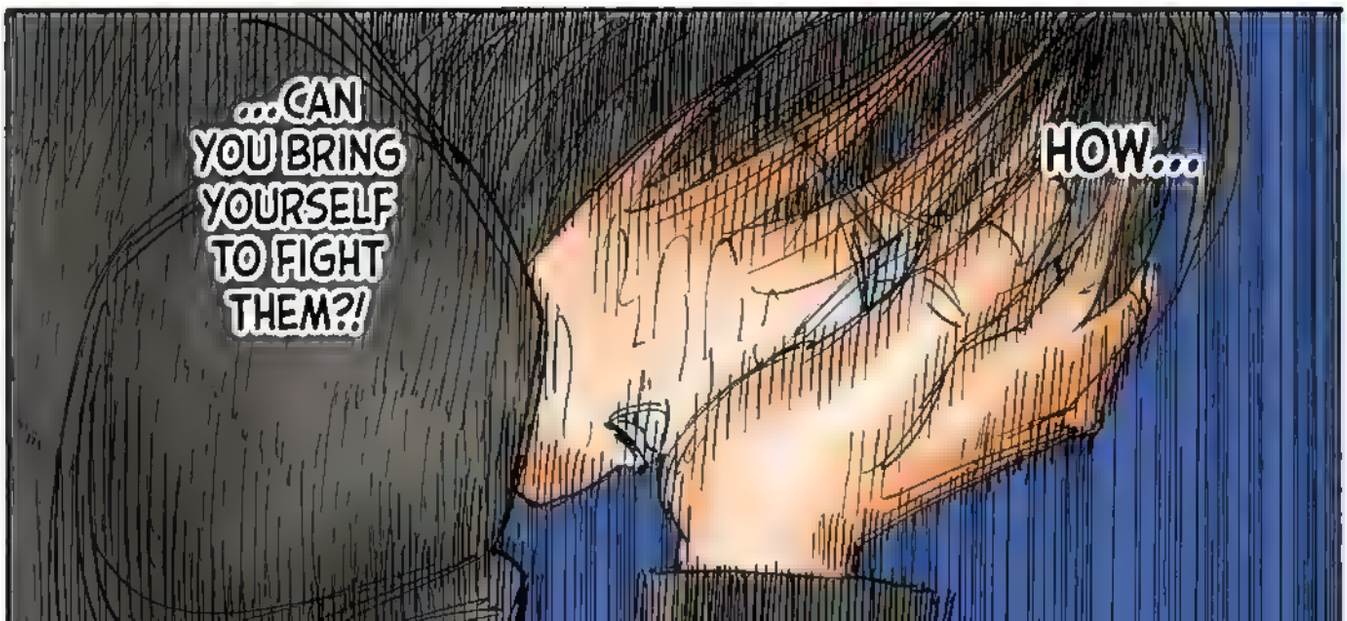
HOW...

BUT...



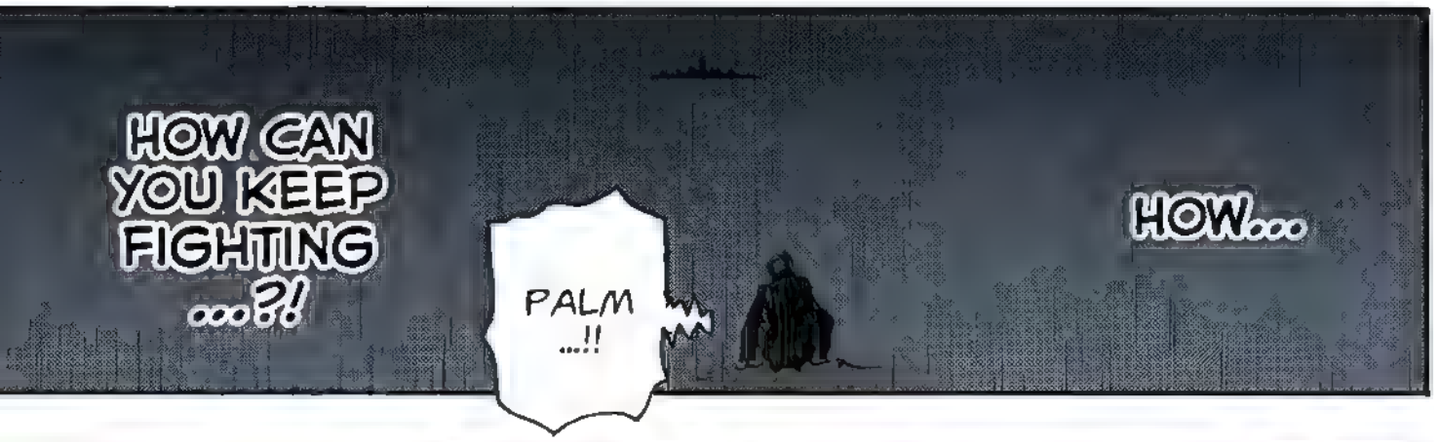
...ABLE TO FACE THEM?!

HOW ARE YOU STILL...



...HUMANITY ?!
TO PROTECT...

...TO SAVE KITE?!
IS IT...

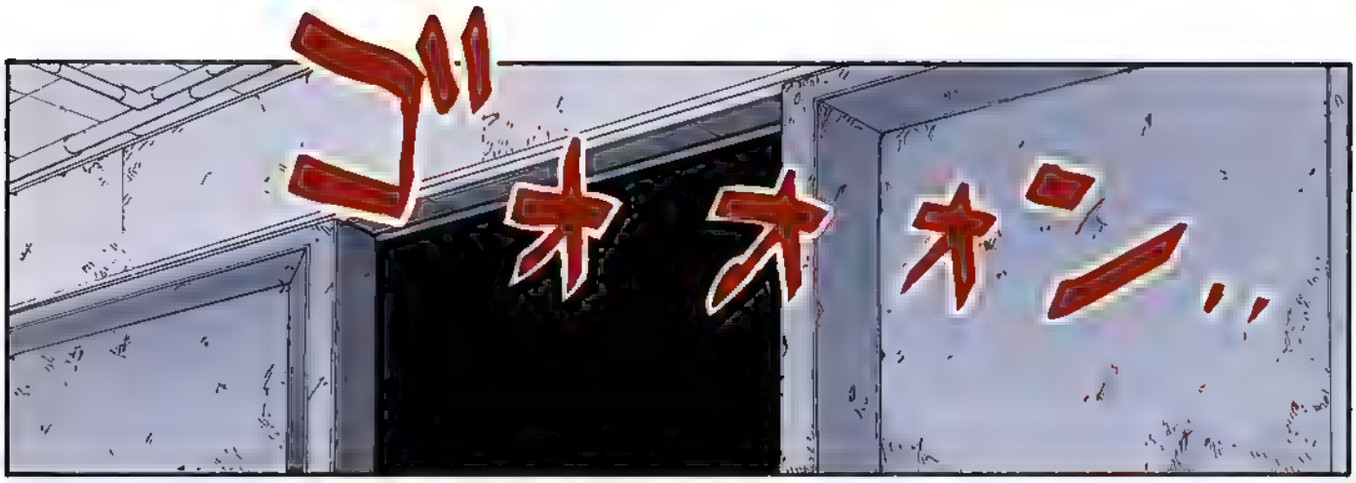

HOW CAN YOU KEEP FIGHTING ...?!
PALM ...!!
HOW...

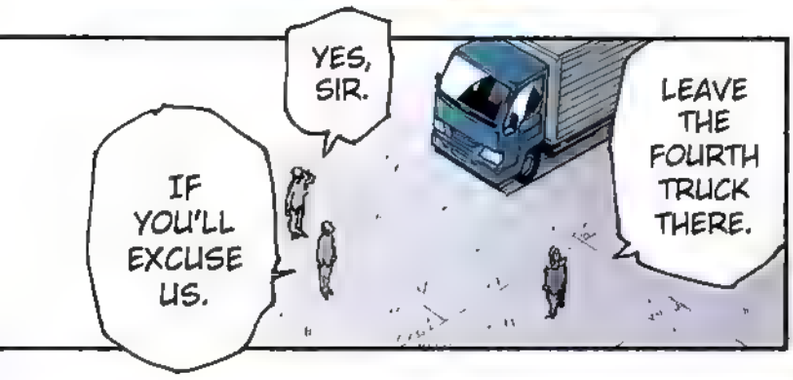
DON'T BE IRRATIONAL ...!!
PLEASE!

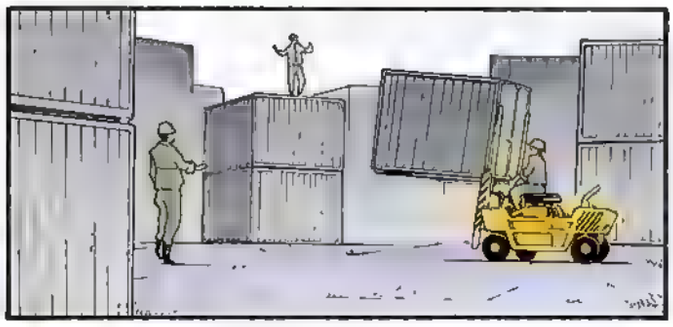
...DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.
PLEASE...

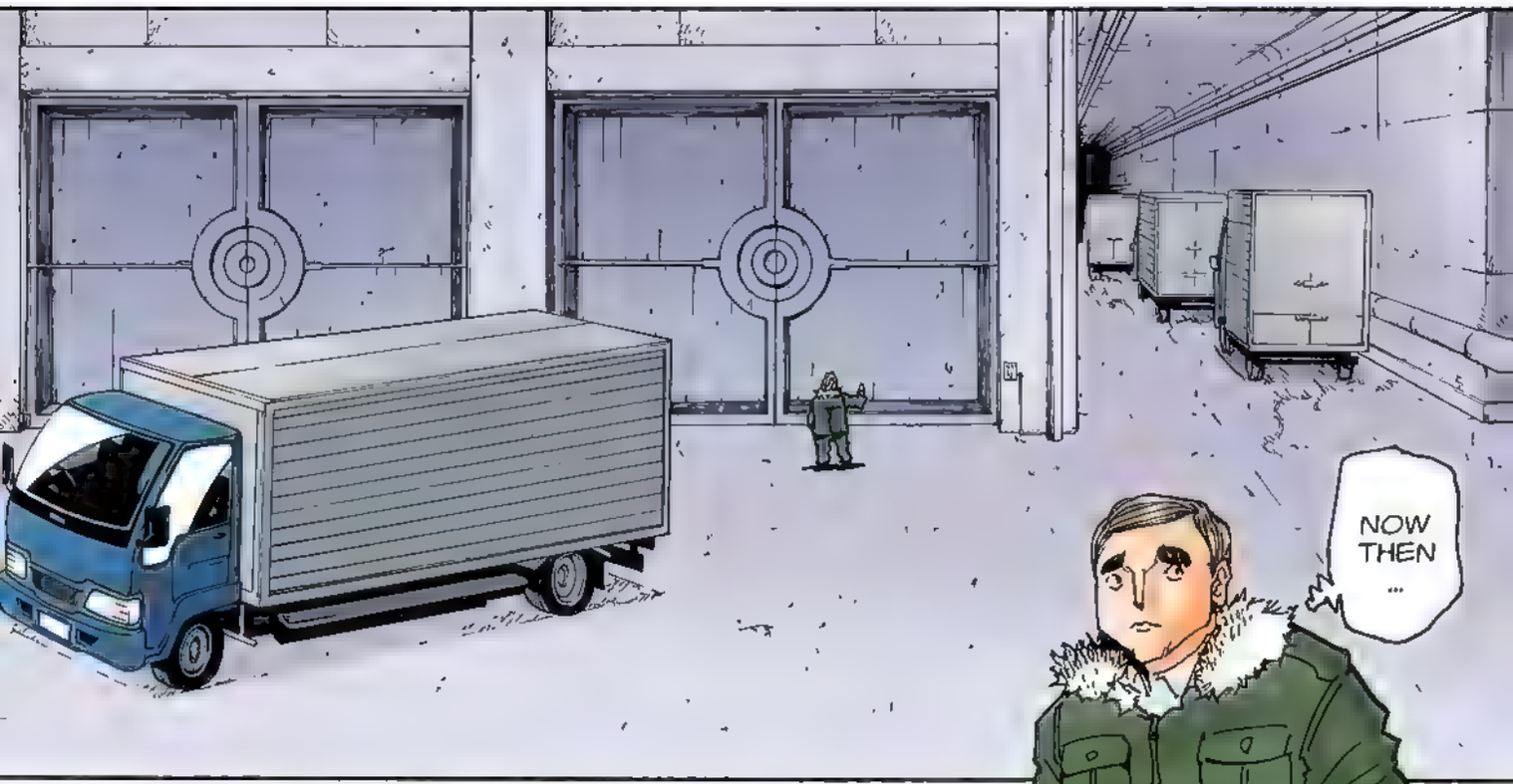
...IT'S ALL OVER...!!
IF YOU'RE CAUGHT...

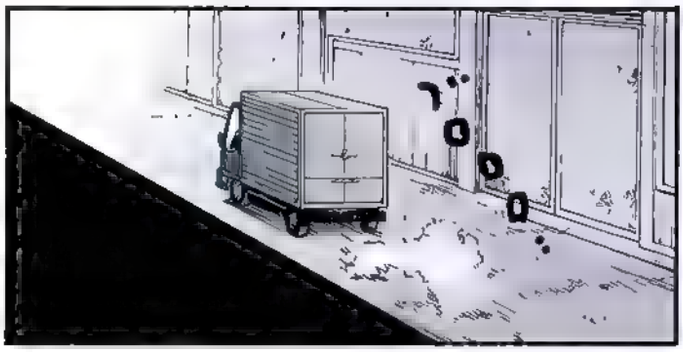
...GO BACK THERE AGAIN ...!!
I CAN'T...
PALM ...!!

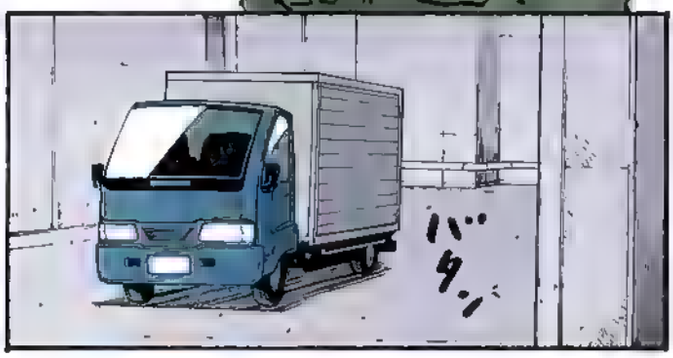

ゴオオオン…

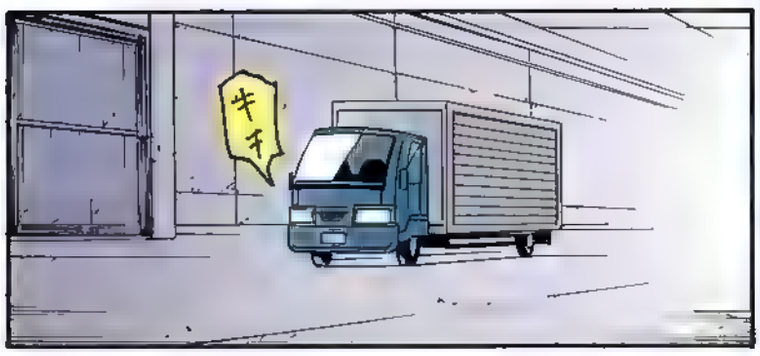

YES, SIR.
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US.
LEAVE THE FOURTH TRUCK THERE.

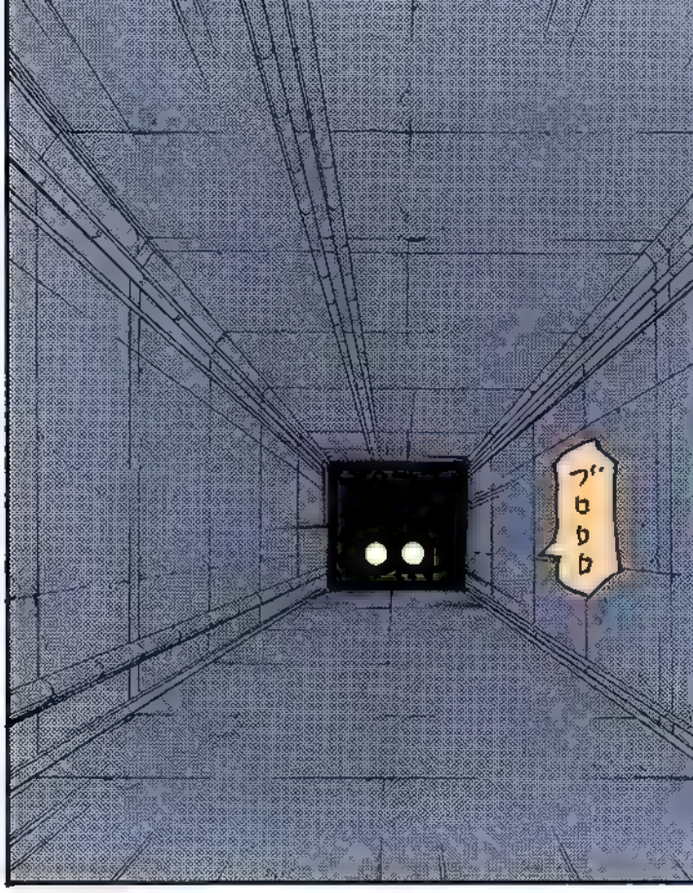


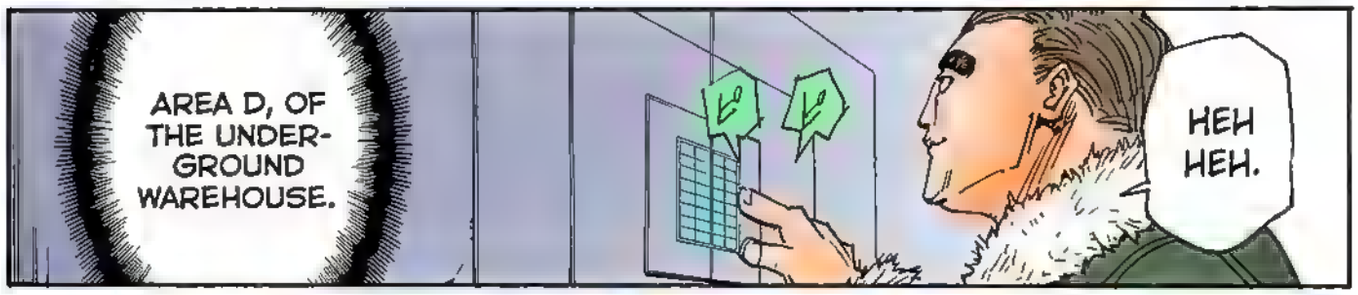

NOW THEN …




バタン







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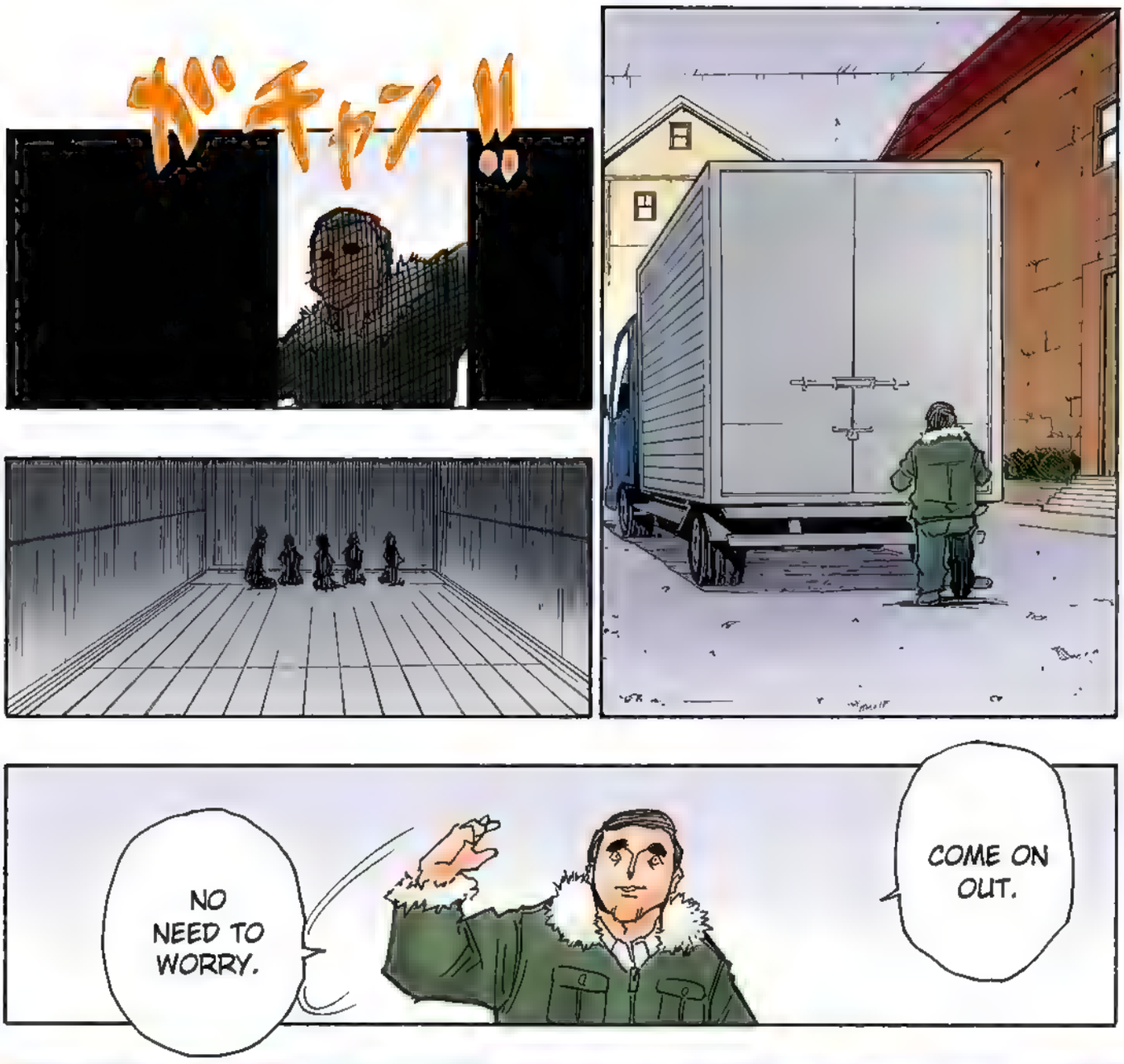
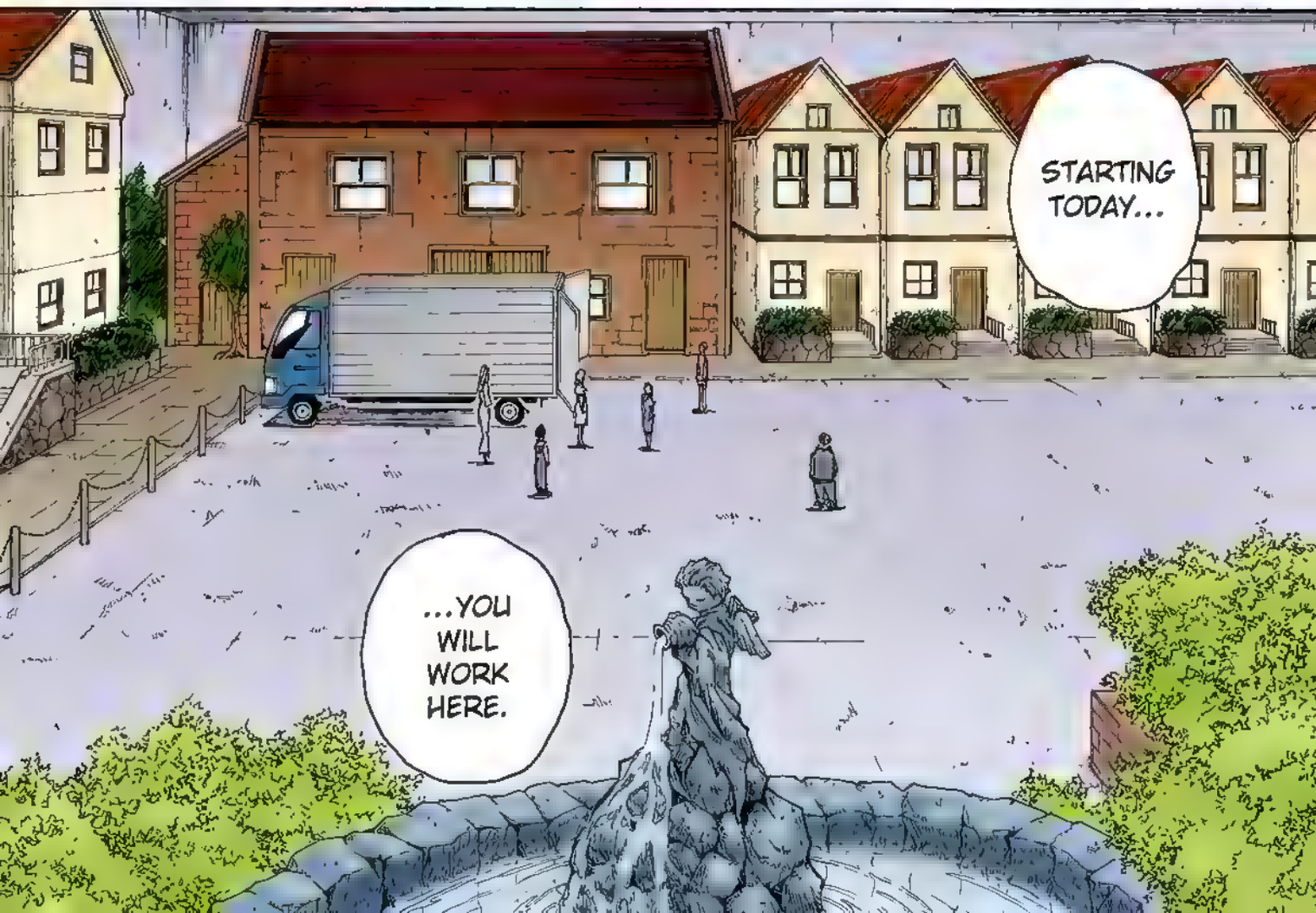
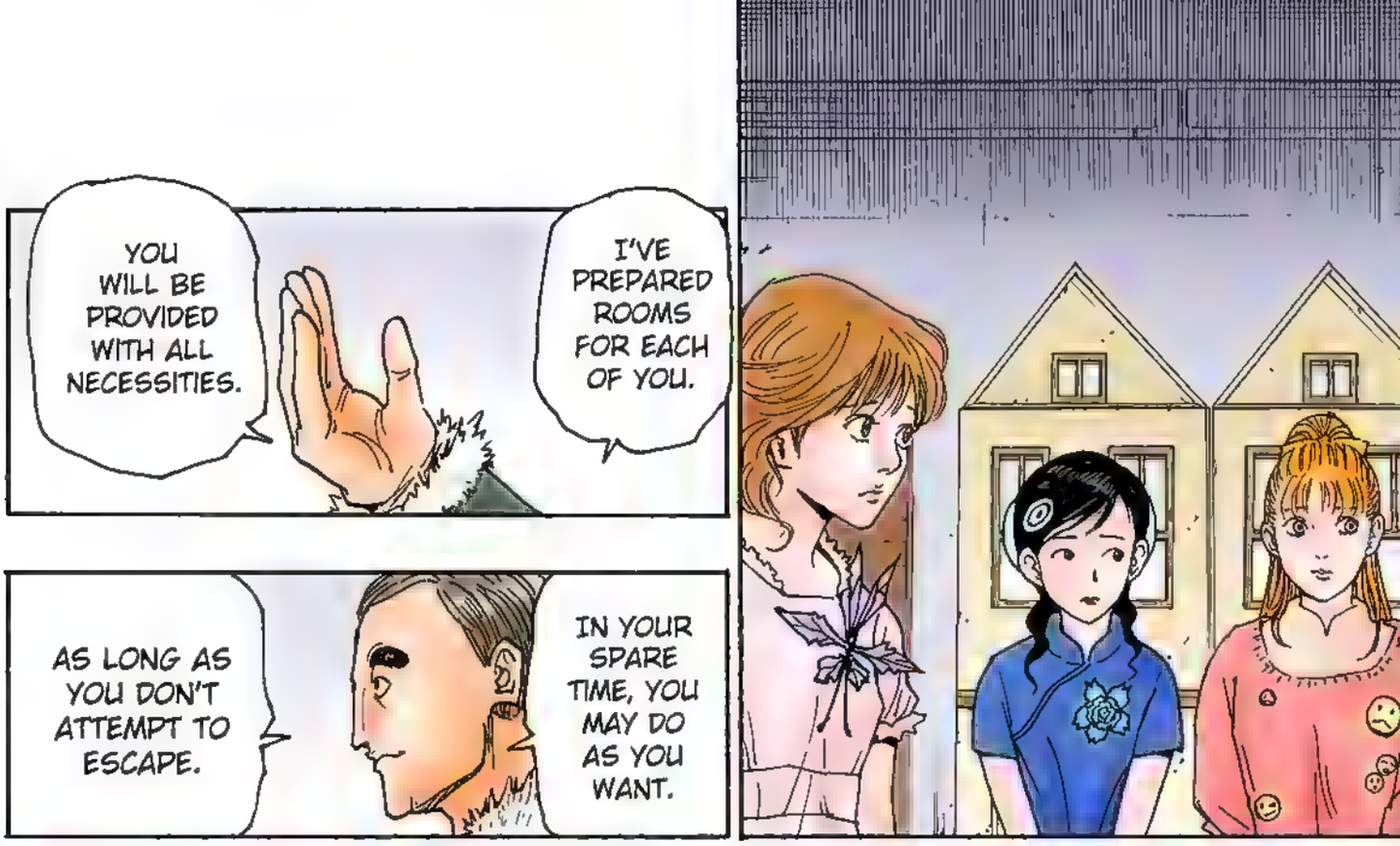
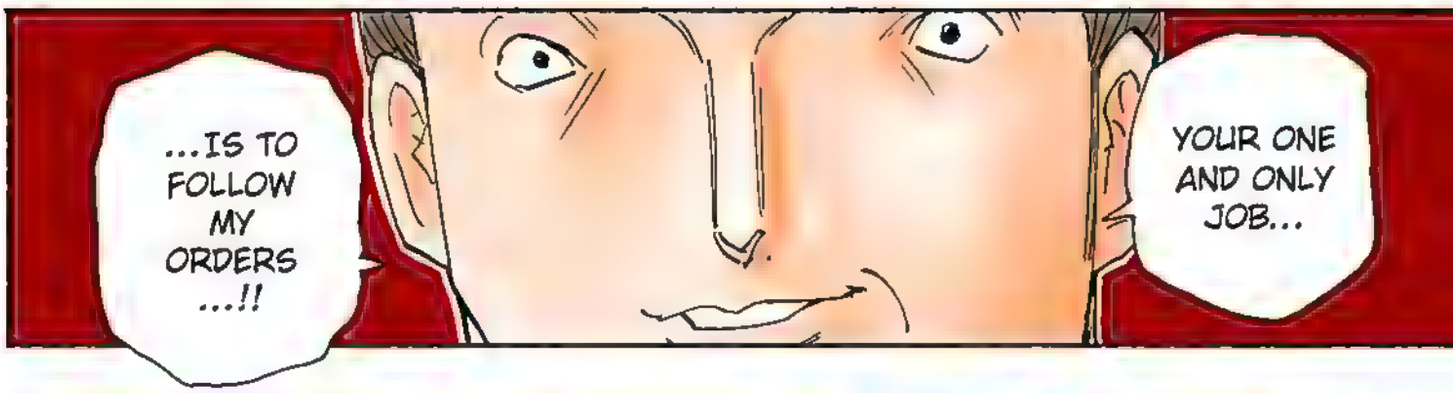
MY VERY OWN PRIVATE PARADISE...

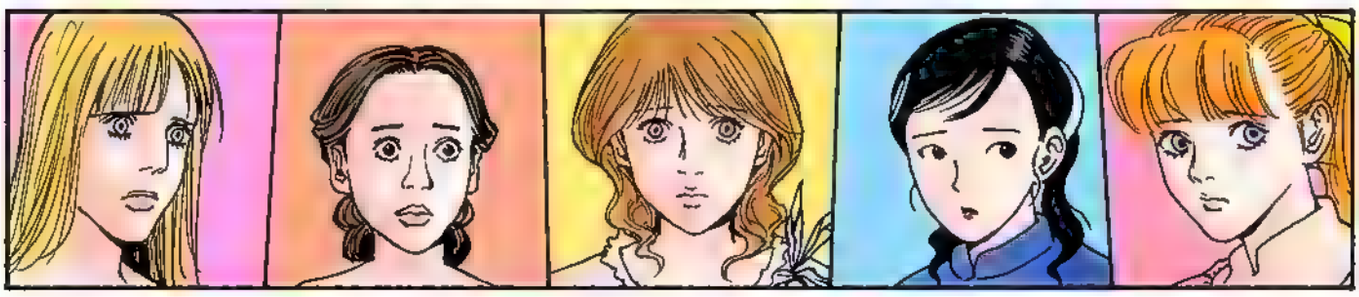
...WHERE NO ONE CAN BOTHER ME...!!

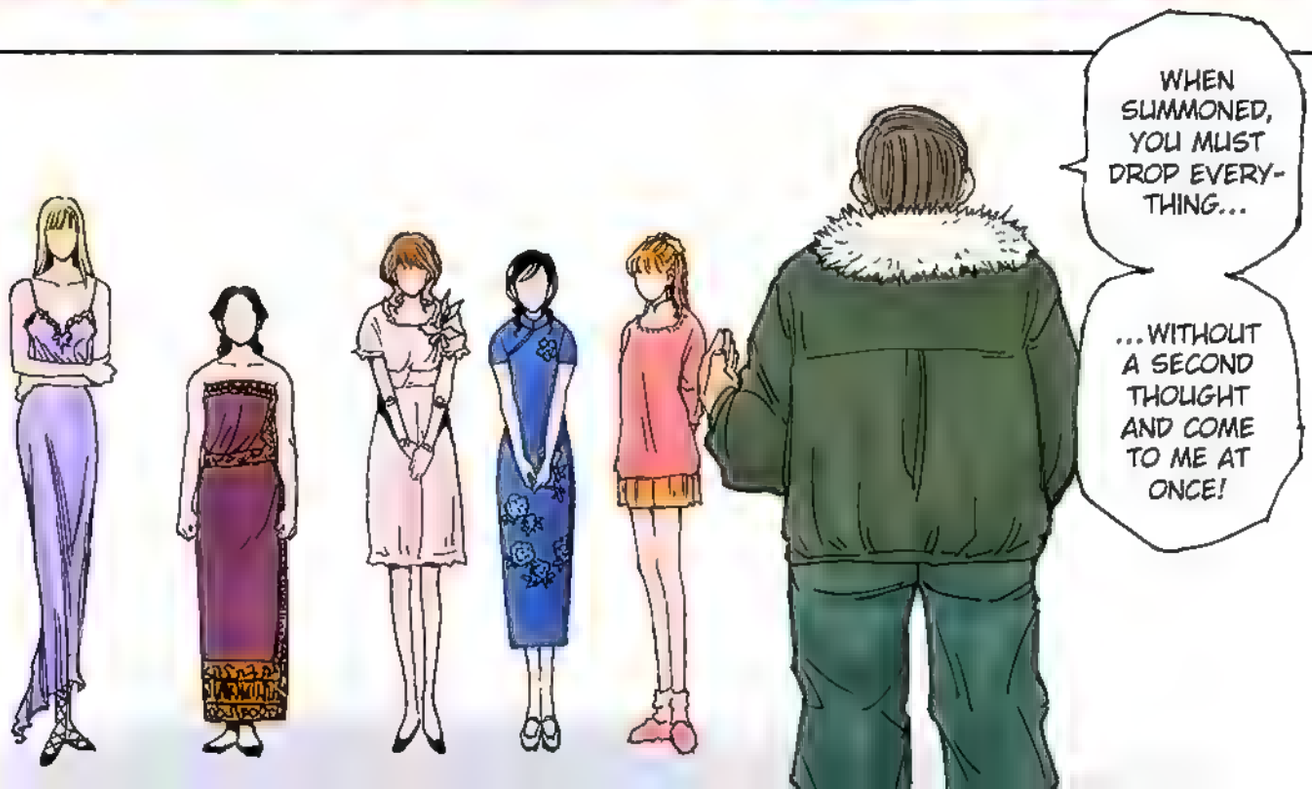

ガチャン!!
NO NEED TO WORRY.
COME ON OUT.

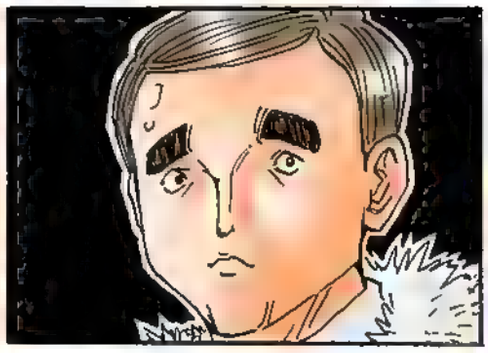

STARTING TODAY...
...YOU WILL WORK HERE.

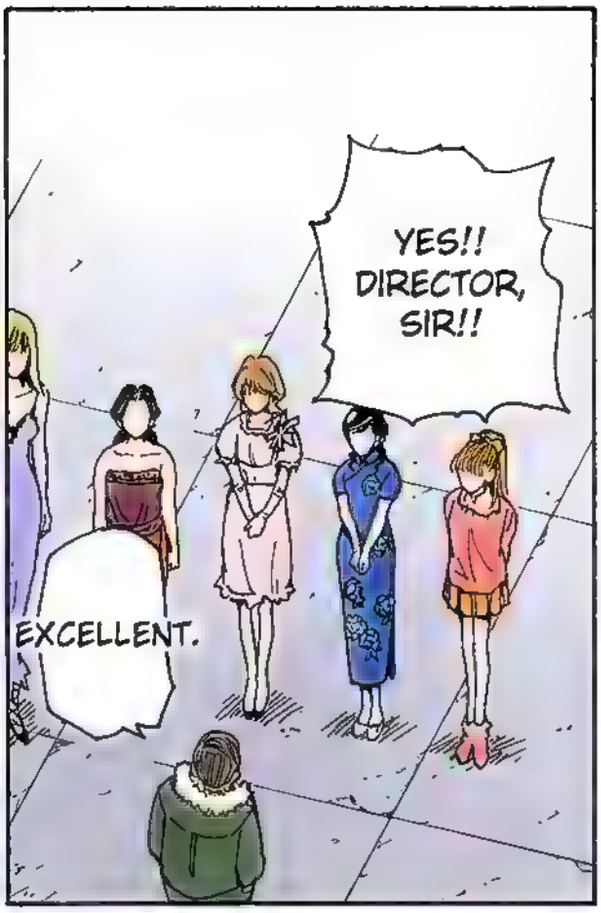

YOU WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ALL NECESSITIES.
I'VE PREPARED ROOMS FOR EACH OF YOU.
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE.
IN YOUR SPARE TIME, YOU MAY DO AS YOU WANT.

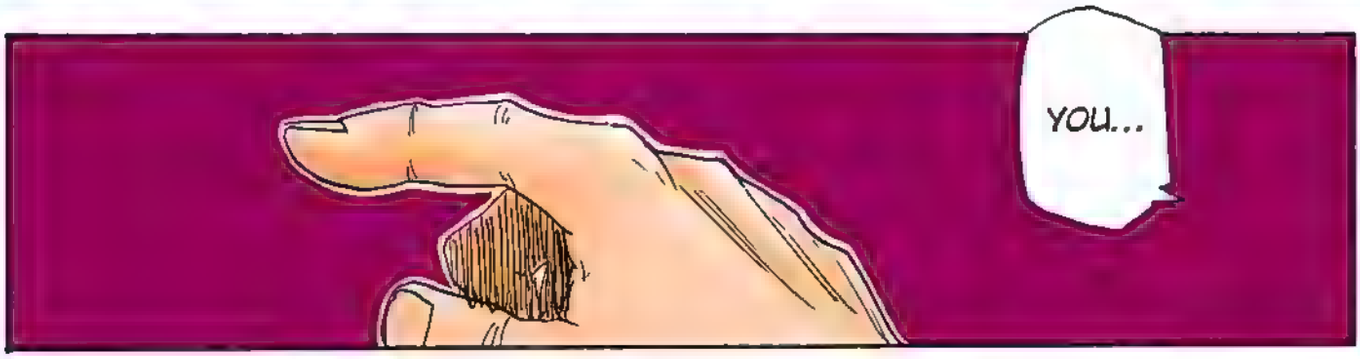

...IS TO FOLLOW MY ORDERS ...!!
YOUR ONE AND ONLY JOB...

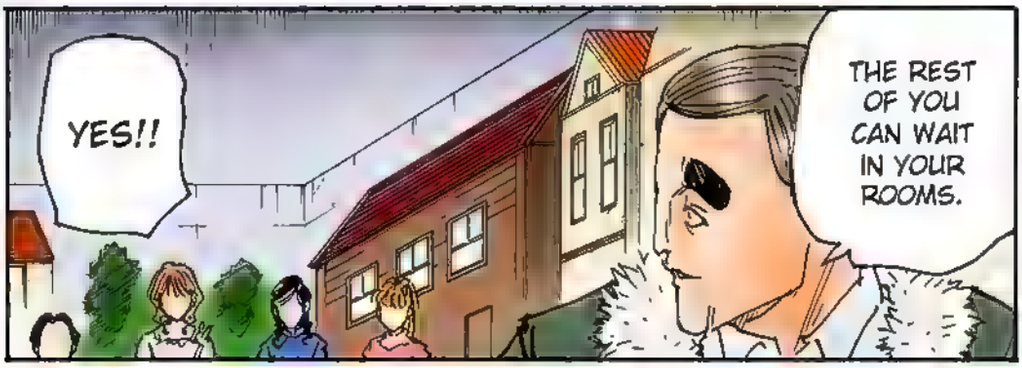


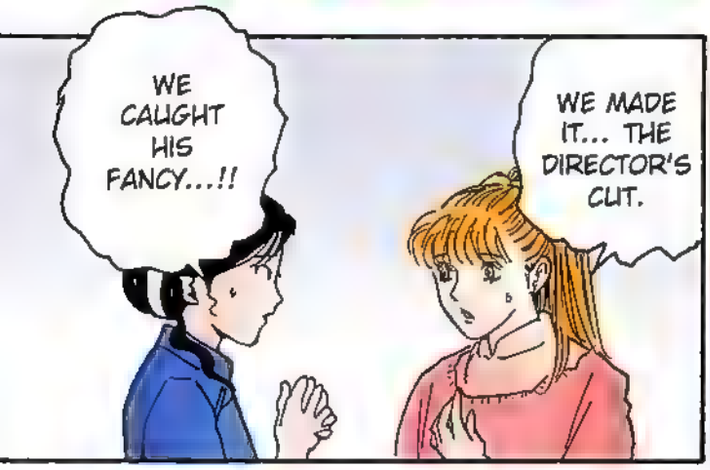

WHEN SUMMONED, YOU MUST DROP EVERY-THING...
...WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT AND COME TO ME AT ONCE!

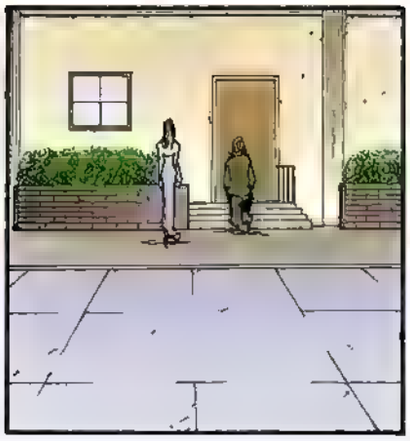



YES!! DIRECTOR, SIR!!
EXCELLENT.

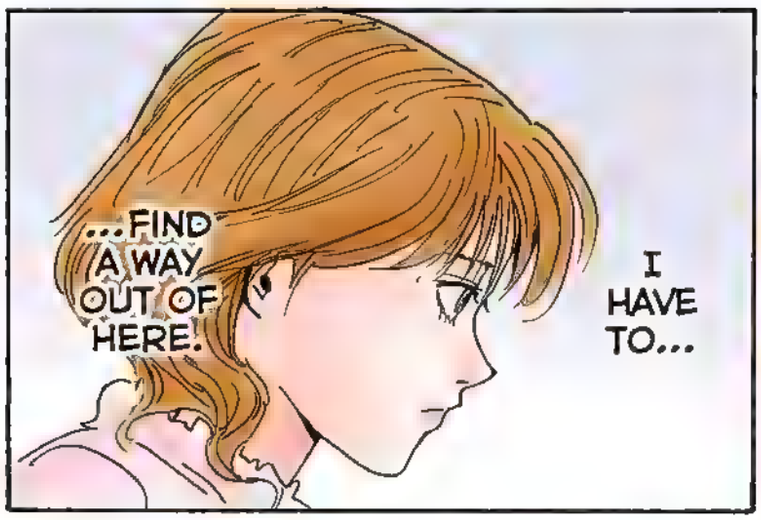

YOU...

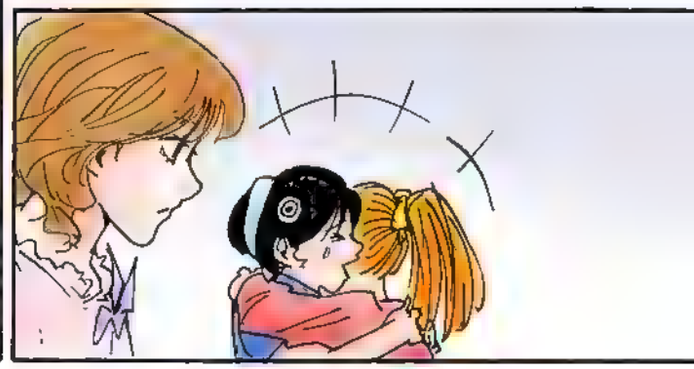

YES!!
THE REST OF YOU CAN WAIT IN YOUR ROOMS.

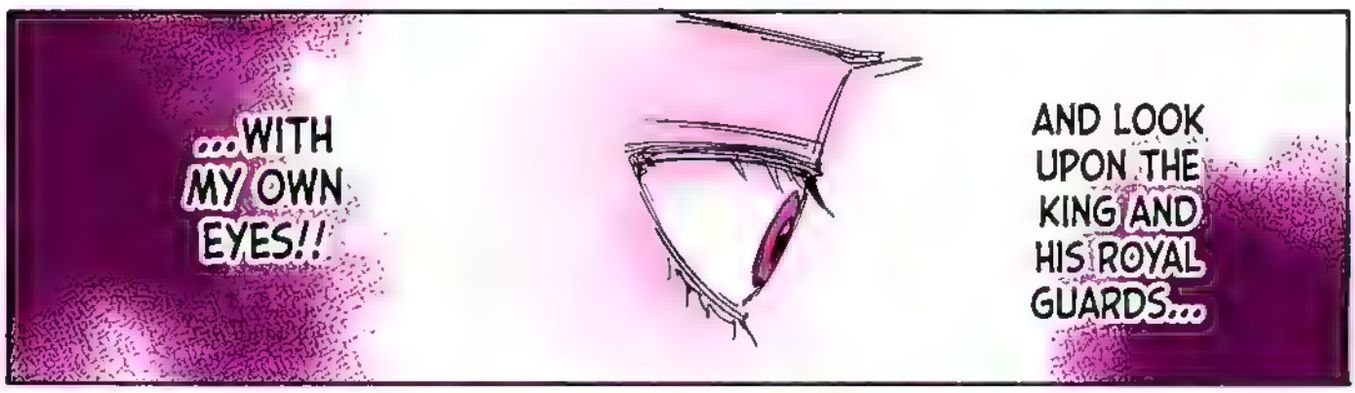

WE CAUGHT HIS FANCY...!!
WE MADE IT... THE DIRECTOR'S CUT.



COME WITH ME.





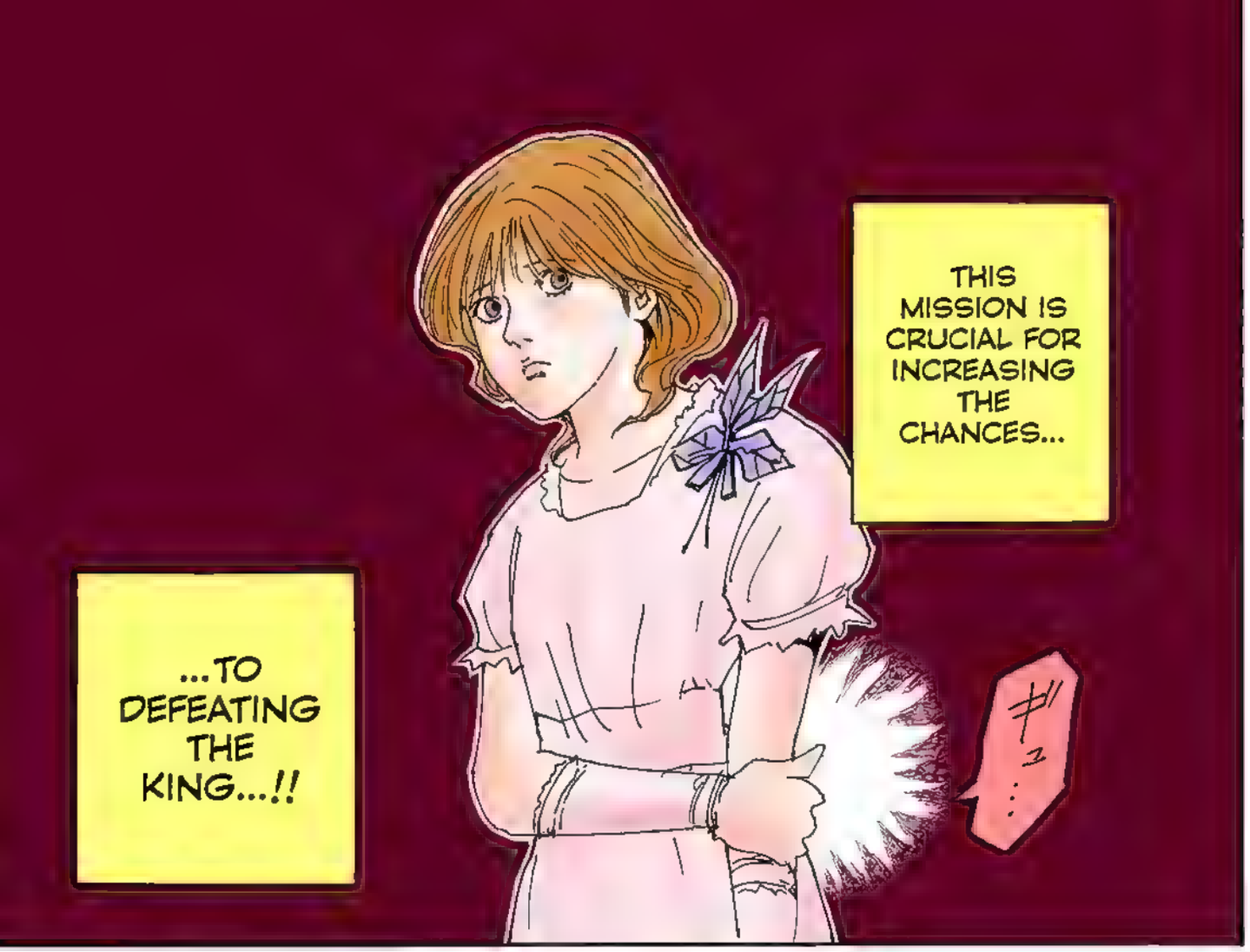


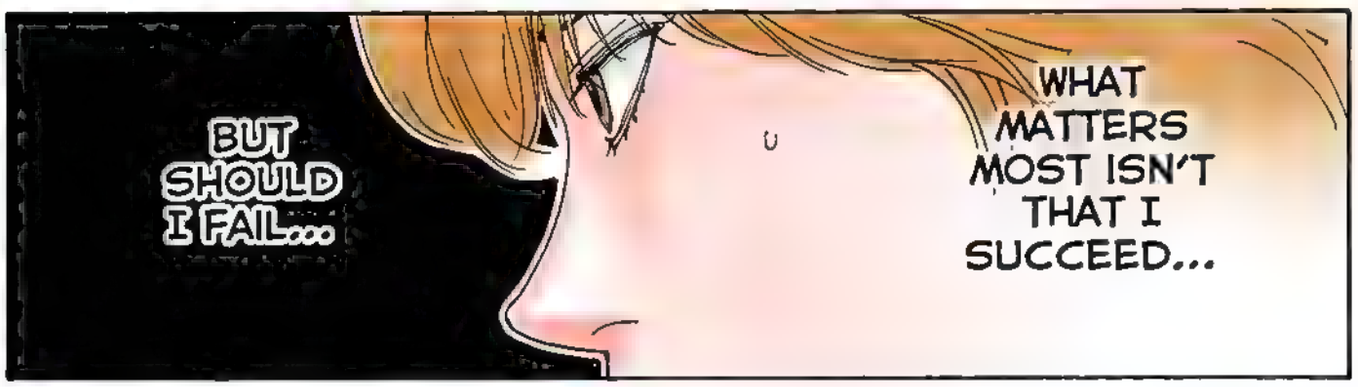
ONCE PALM HAS SEEN A PERSON WITH HER OWN EYES, SHE CAN OBSERVE THEM WITH HER CRYSTAL BALL AT ANY TIME.

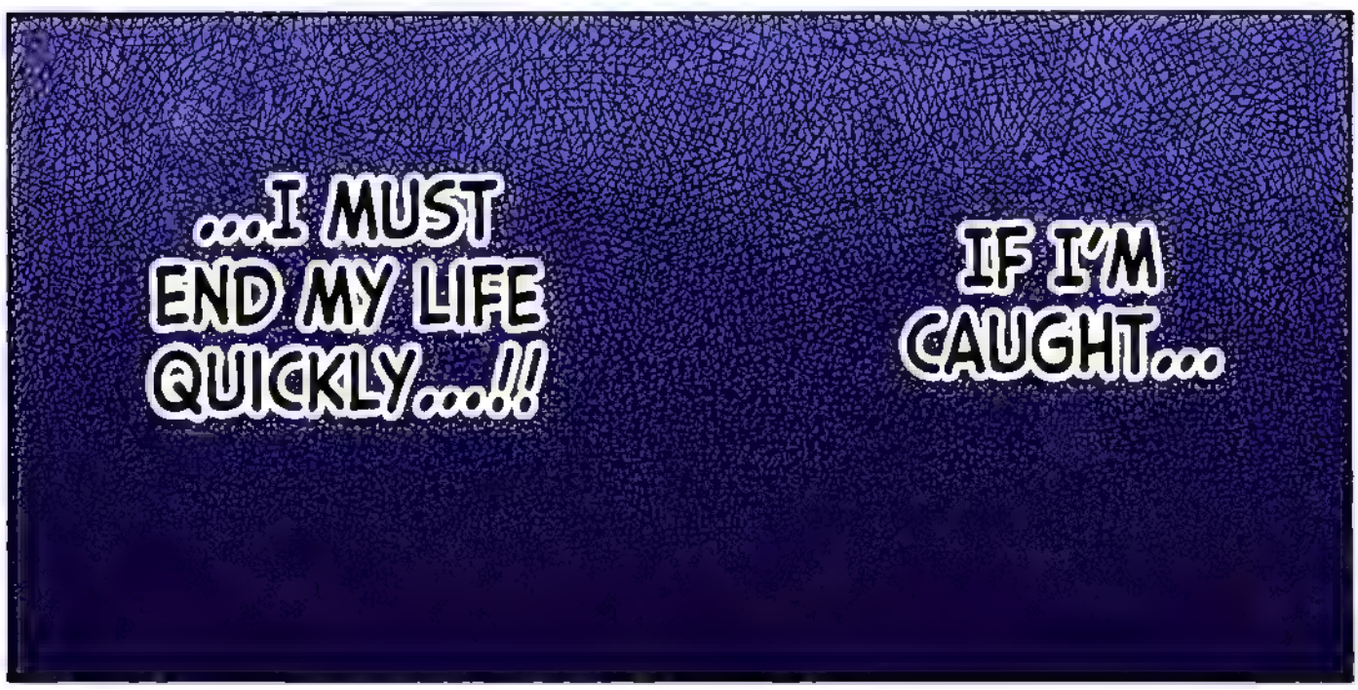
WITH HER ABILITY, THE HUNTERS WILL BE ABLE TO CHECK ON THE KING AND THE ROYAL GUARDS, ENABLING THEM TO MAKE CRUCIAL DECISIONS WITHOUT SECOND GUESSING THEMSELVES.

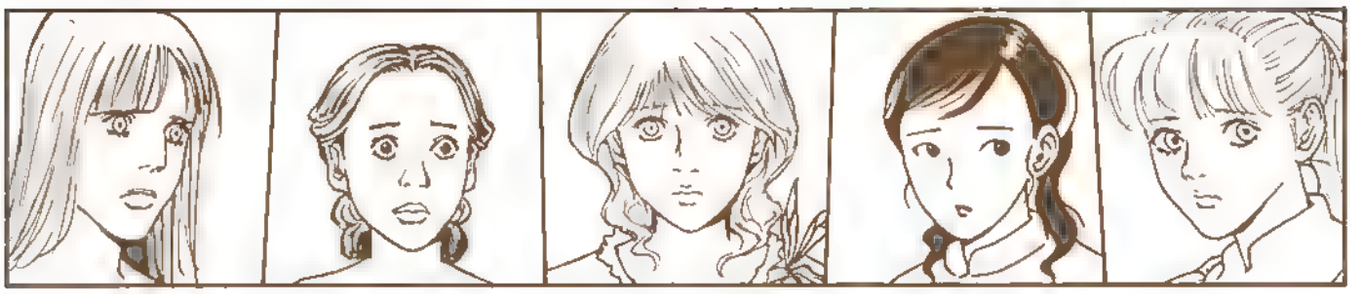
ONLY ONE EXIT.

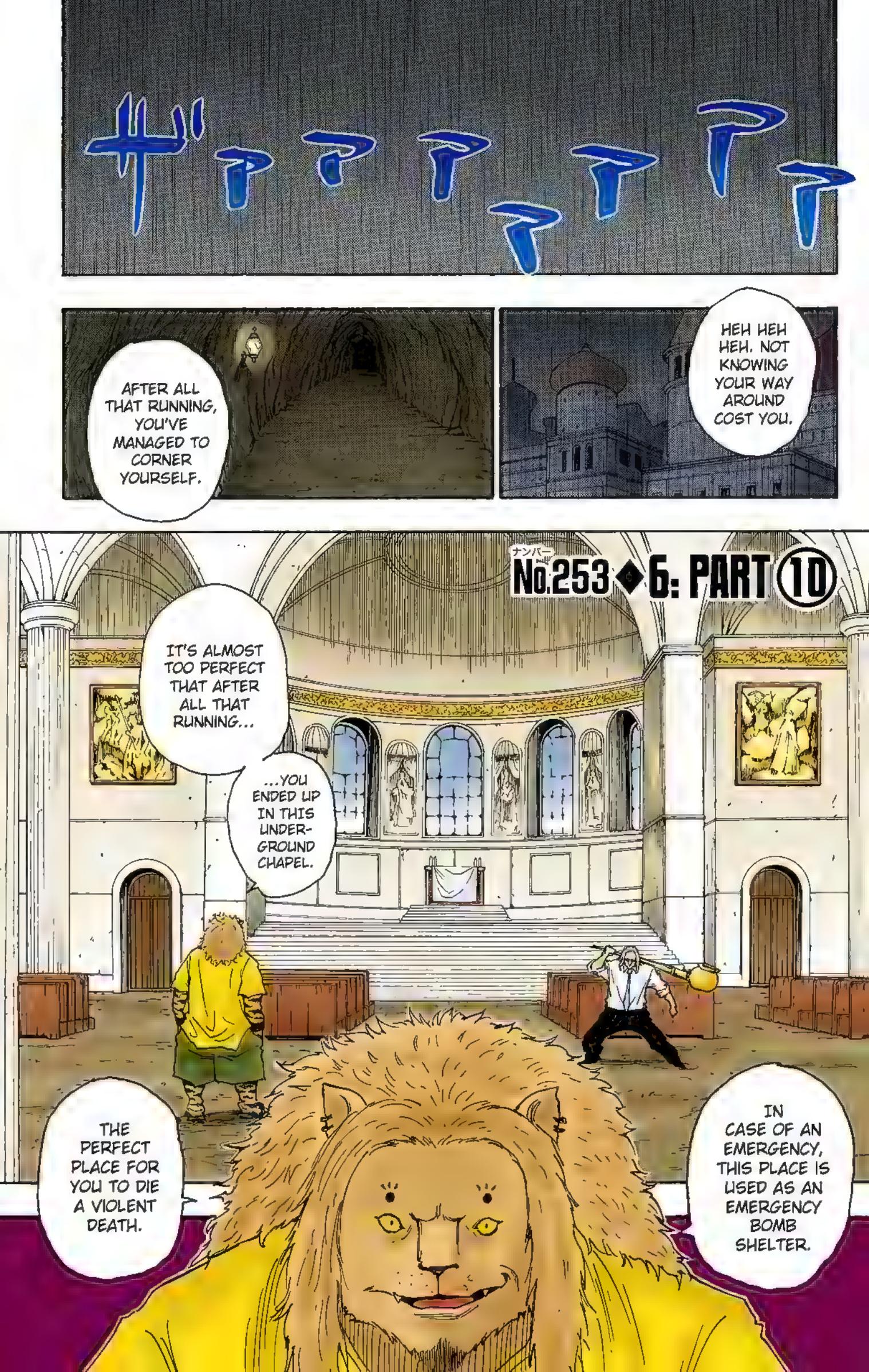
I'LL HAVE TO GET IT FROM BIZEFF FIRST.

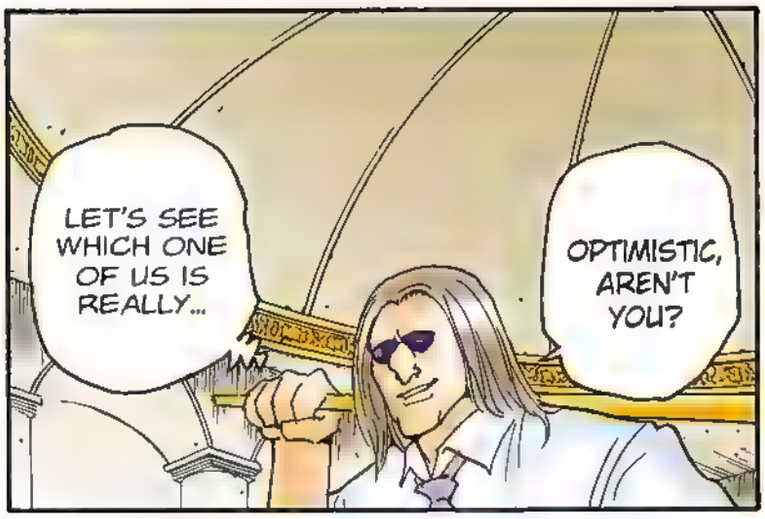

THIS MISSION IS CRUCIAL FOR INCREASING THE CHANCES...
...TO DEFEATING THE KING...!!
ﾊｯ...


BUT SHOULD I FAIL...
WHAT MATTERS MOST ISN'T THAT I SUCCEED...


...I MUST END MY LIFE QUICKLY...!!
IF I'M CAUGHT...

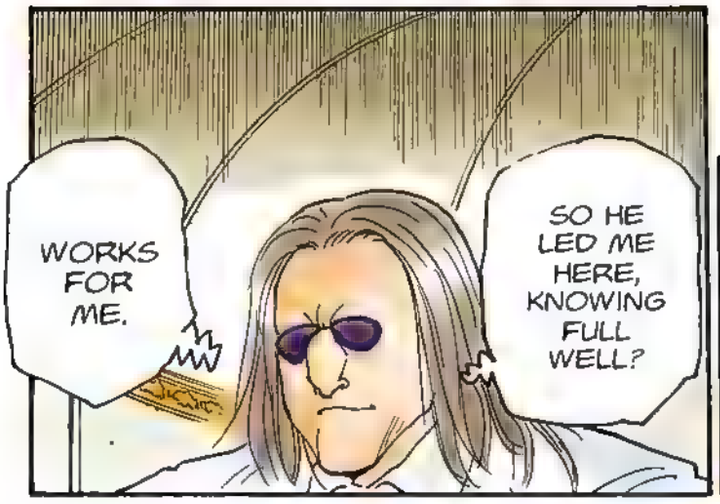


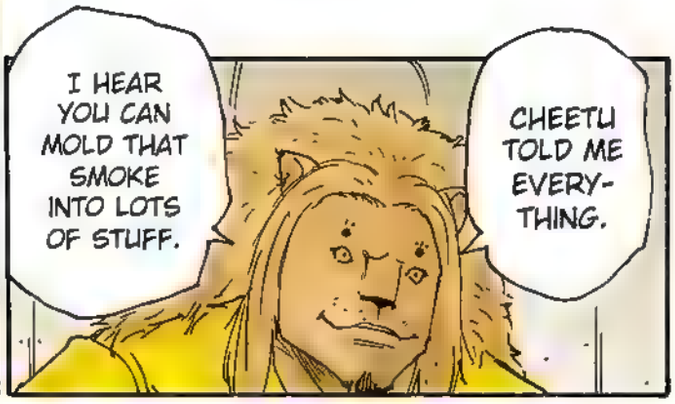

ザアアアアアア
AFTER ALL THAT RUNNING, YOU'VE MANAGED TO CORNER YOURSELF.
HEH HEH HEH. NOT KNOWING YOUR WAY AROUND COST YOU.
No.253 ◆ 6: PART 10
IT'S ALMOST TOO PERFECT THAT AFTER ALL THAT RUNNING...
...YOU ENDED UP IN THIS UNDER-GROUND CHAPEL.
THE PERFECT PLACE FOR YOU TO DIE A VIOLENT DEATH.
IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, THIS PLACE IS USED AS AN EMERGENCY BOMB SHELTER.

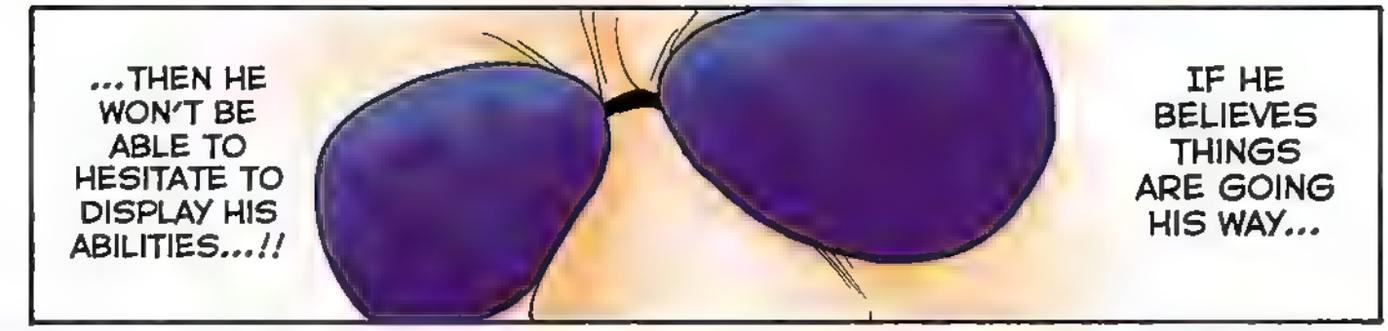

LET'S SEE WHICH ONE OF US IS REALLY...
OPTIMISTIC, AREN'T YOU?

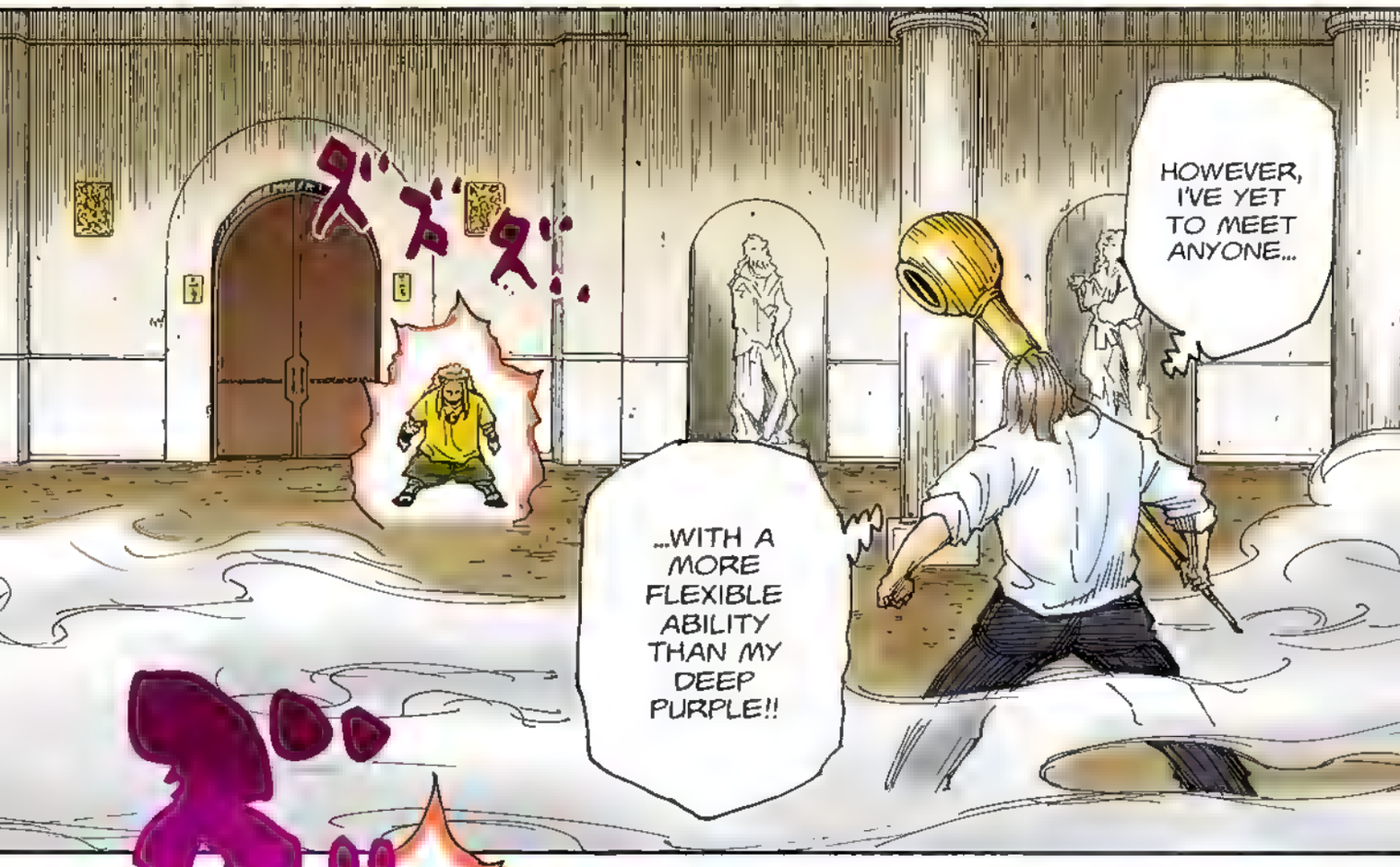
I'M AN ATHEIST.
WELL, YOU'LL HAVE TO SAY YOUR OWN PRAYERS.
PFFT.

FWOO...
...CORNERED.


WORKS FOR ME.
SO HE LED ME HERE, KNOWING FULL WELL?


I HEAR YOU CAN MOLD THAT SMOKE INTO LOTS OF STUFF.
CHEETU TOLD ME EVERY-THING.

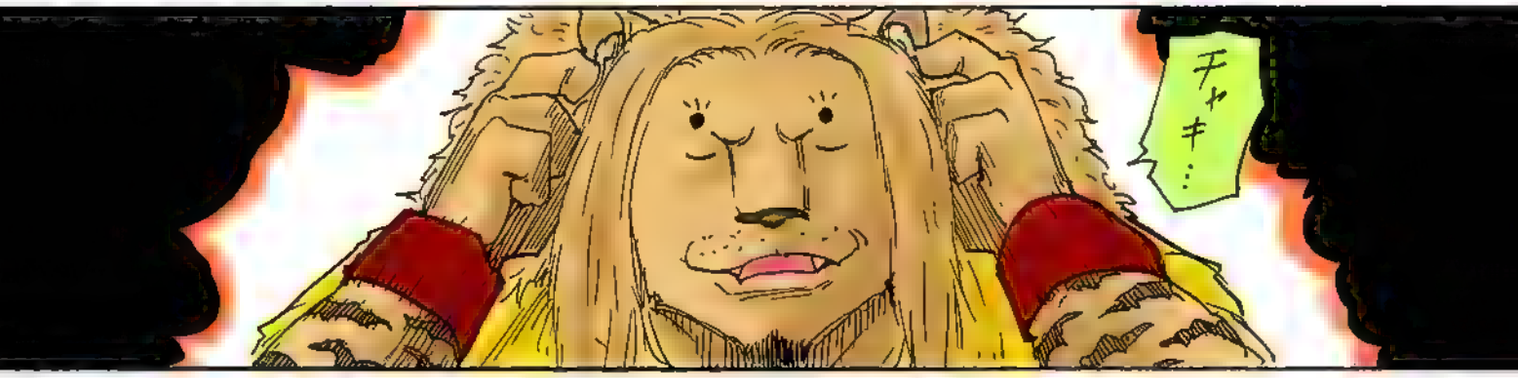

...THEN HE WON'T BE ABLE TO HESITATE TO DISPLAY HIS ABILITIES...!!
IF HE BELIEVES THINGS ARE GOING HIS WAY...

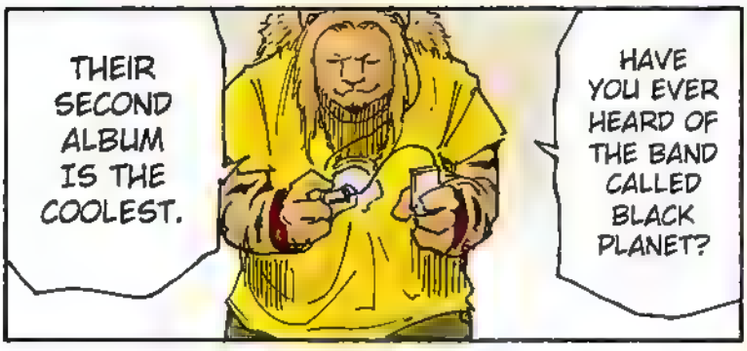

ズズズ
HOWEVER, I'VE YET TO MEET ANYONE...
...WITH A MORE FLEXIBLE ABILITY THAN MY DEEP PURPLE!!
ズ

IT MAY BE WISER TO ATTACK BEFORE HE SHOWS HIS ABILITY... BUT THAT'S NOT HOW...
...A MAN FIGHTS HIS BATTLES!

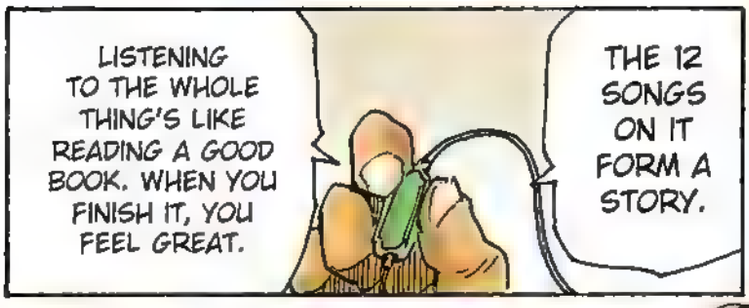
I FEEL TINGLY, AND I LOVE IT!
THE MOMENT EACH OPPONENT SHOWCASES THEIR ABILITIES ...!!
IT'S ADDIC-TIVE!

!?


チャキ…

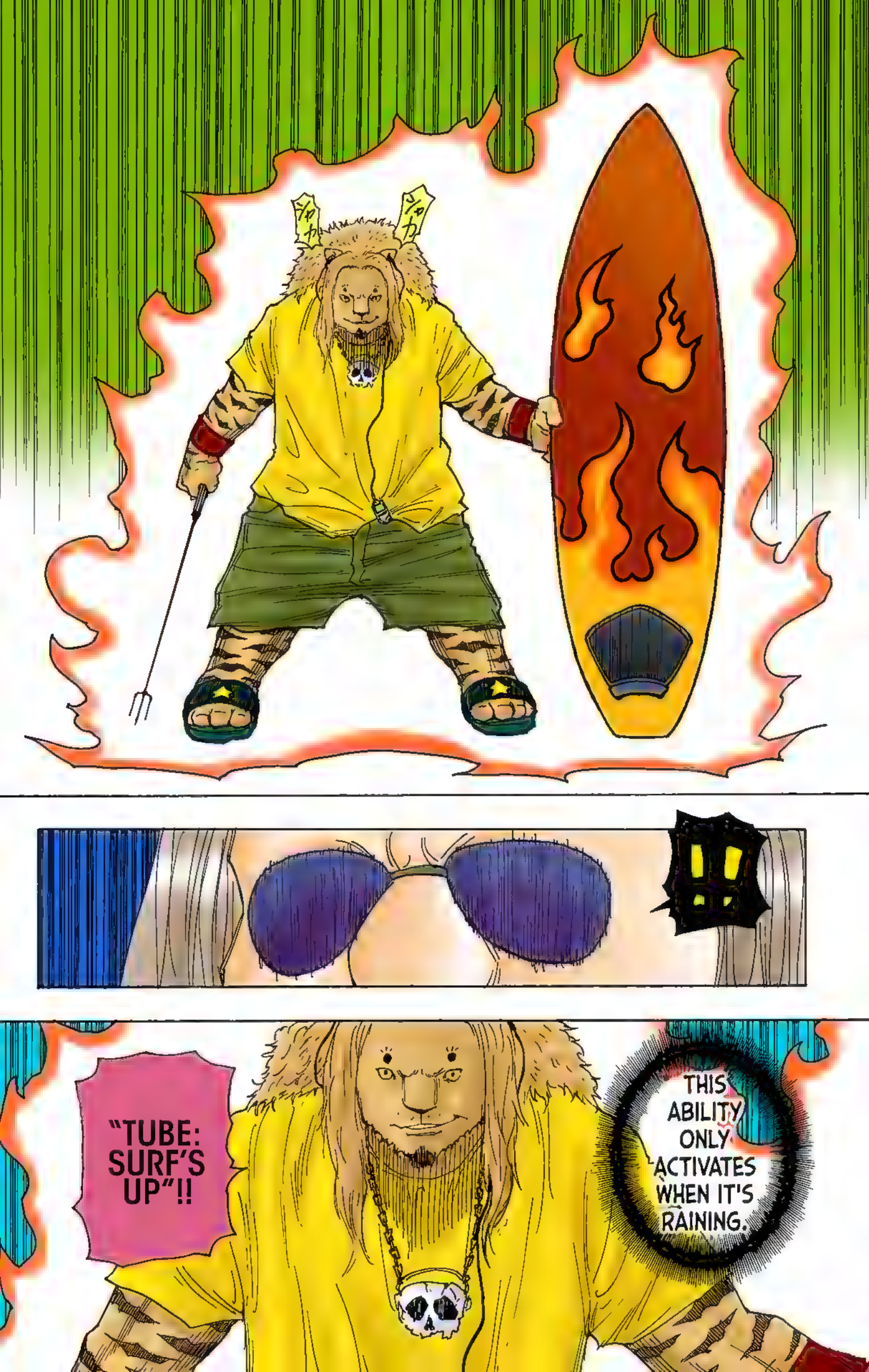

THEIR SECOND ALBUM IS THE COOLEST.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE BAND CALLED BLACK PLANET?

WILLINGLY RESTRICTING ONE OF YOUR SENSES?
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


LISTENING TO THE WHOLE THING'S LIKE READING A GOOD BOOK. WHEN YOU FINISH IT, YOU FEEL GREAT.
THE 12 SONGS ON IT FORM A STORY.

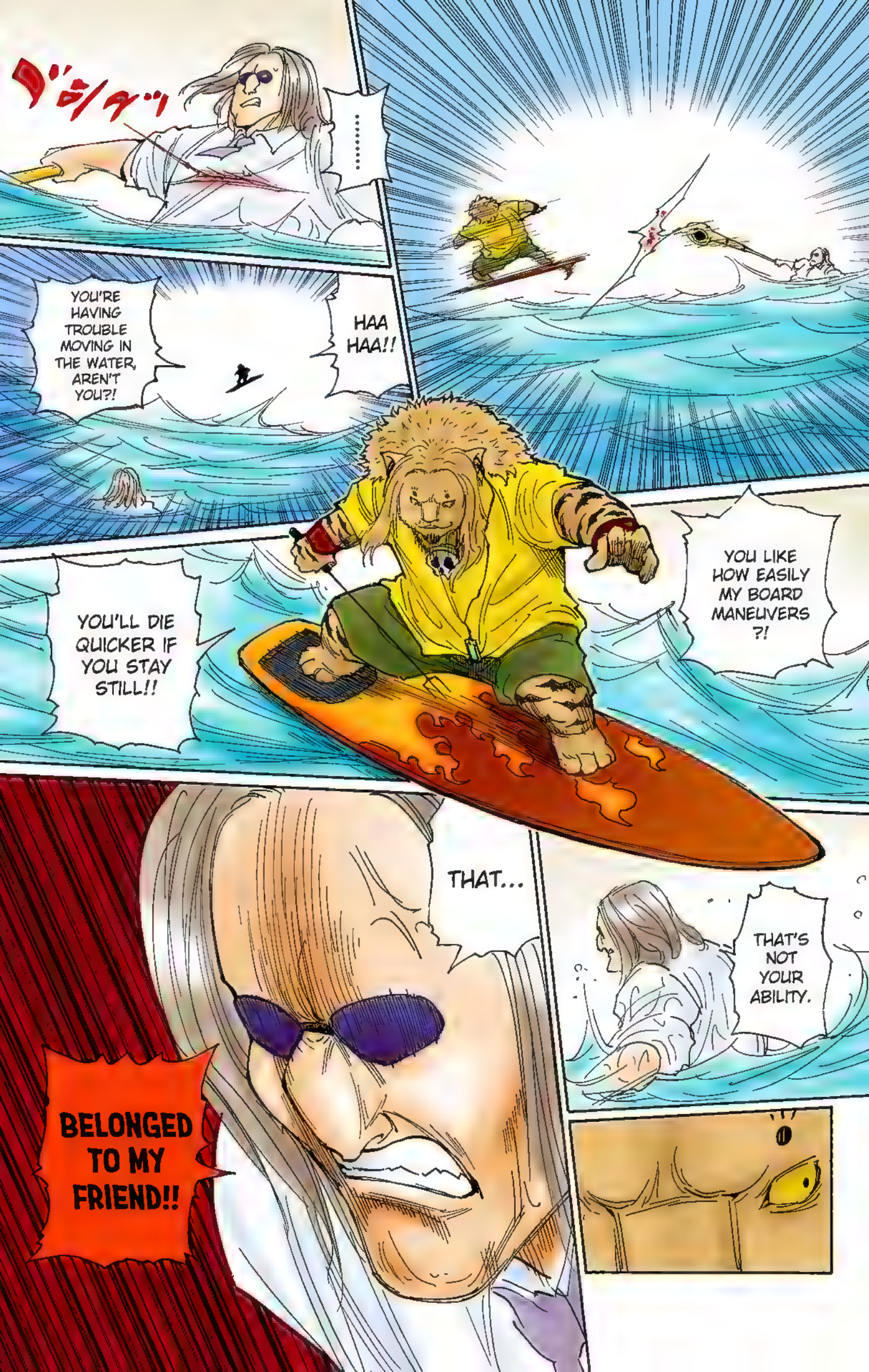
YEAH, I KNOW.
……

...THE ALBUM'S EXACTLY 60 MINUTES LONG.
IT'S A MASTER-PIECE.
AND THE BEST PART OF ALL...
...RENTAL!!
BEGIN...
シャアアア
I HAVE A HARD TIME FIGHTING SOMEONE...
...BUT I AGREE.
I HATE TO ADMIT IT...
THIS COULD BE BAD...
WITH THE SAME TASTE AS MINE...


ジャカ
ジャカ
"TUBE: SURF'S UP"!!
THIS ABILITY ONLY ACTIVATES WHEN IT'S RAINING.

!?
"TUBE'S" ABILITY IS TO...
...SUMMON THE OCEAN!!
!!!

WHOA!
WELL? WHAT DO YOU THINK...
...OF MY BIG WAVE?!
I CAN EASILY WASH AWAY YOUR WIMPY SMOKE!!
!!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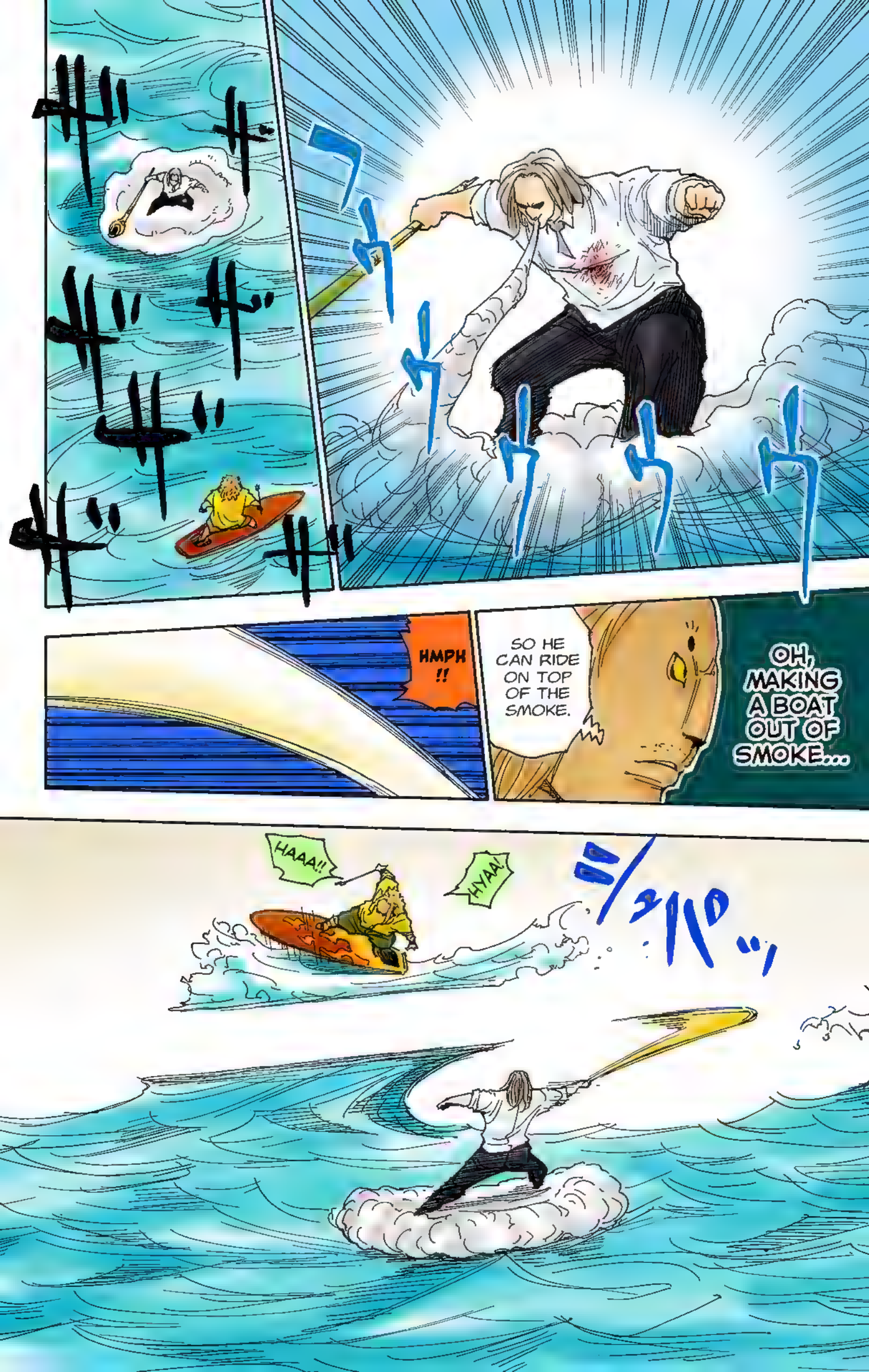
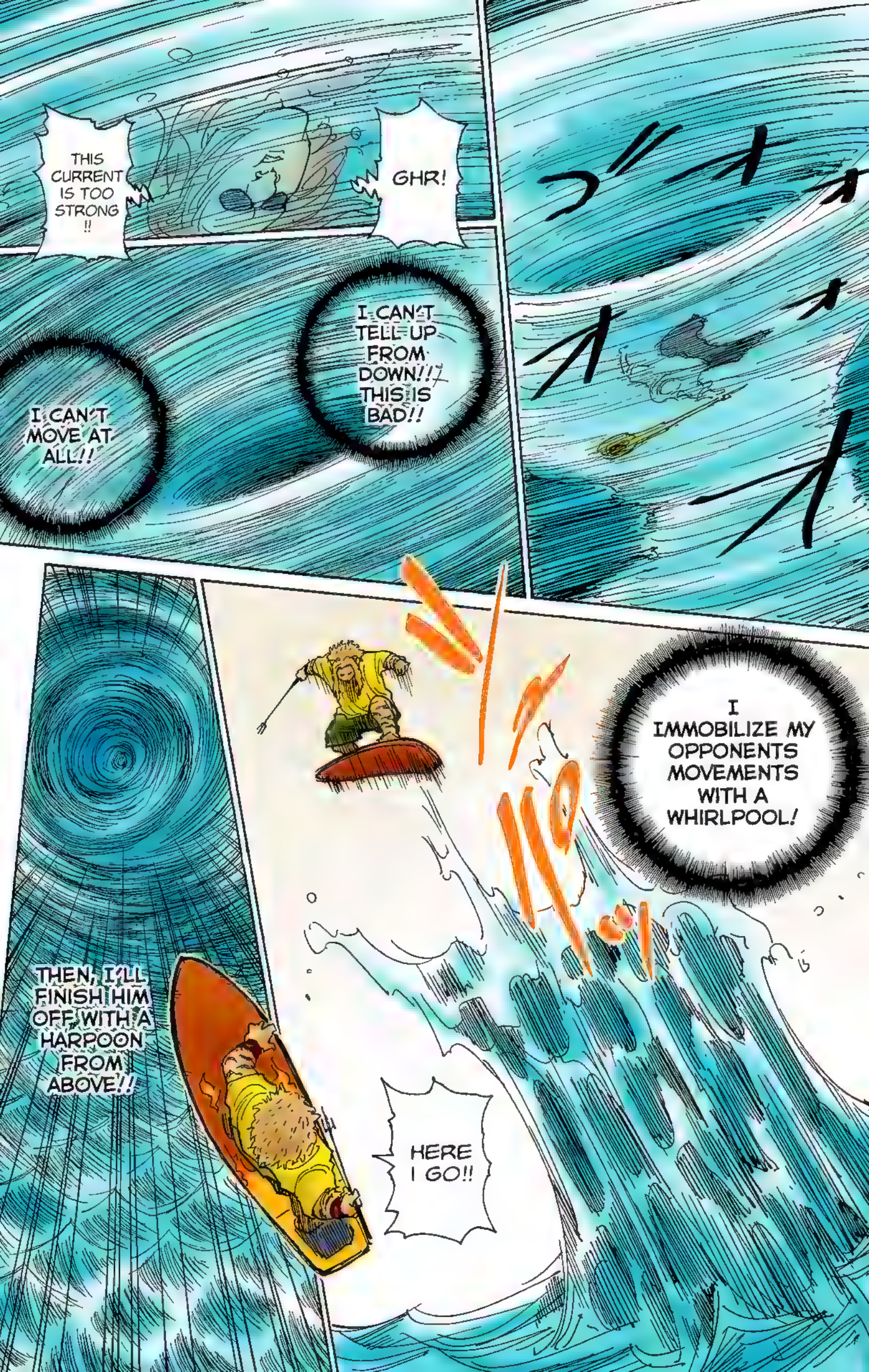
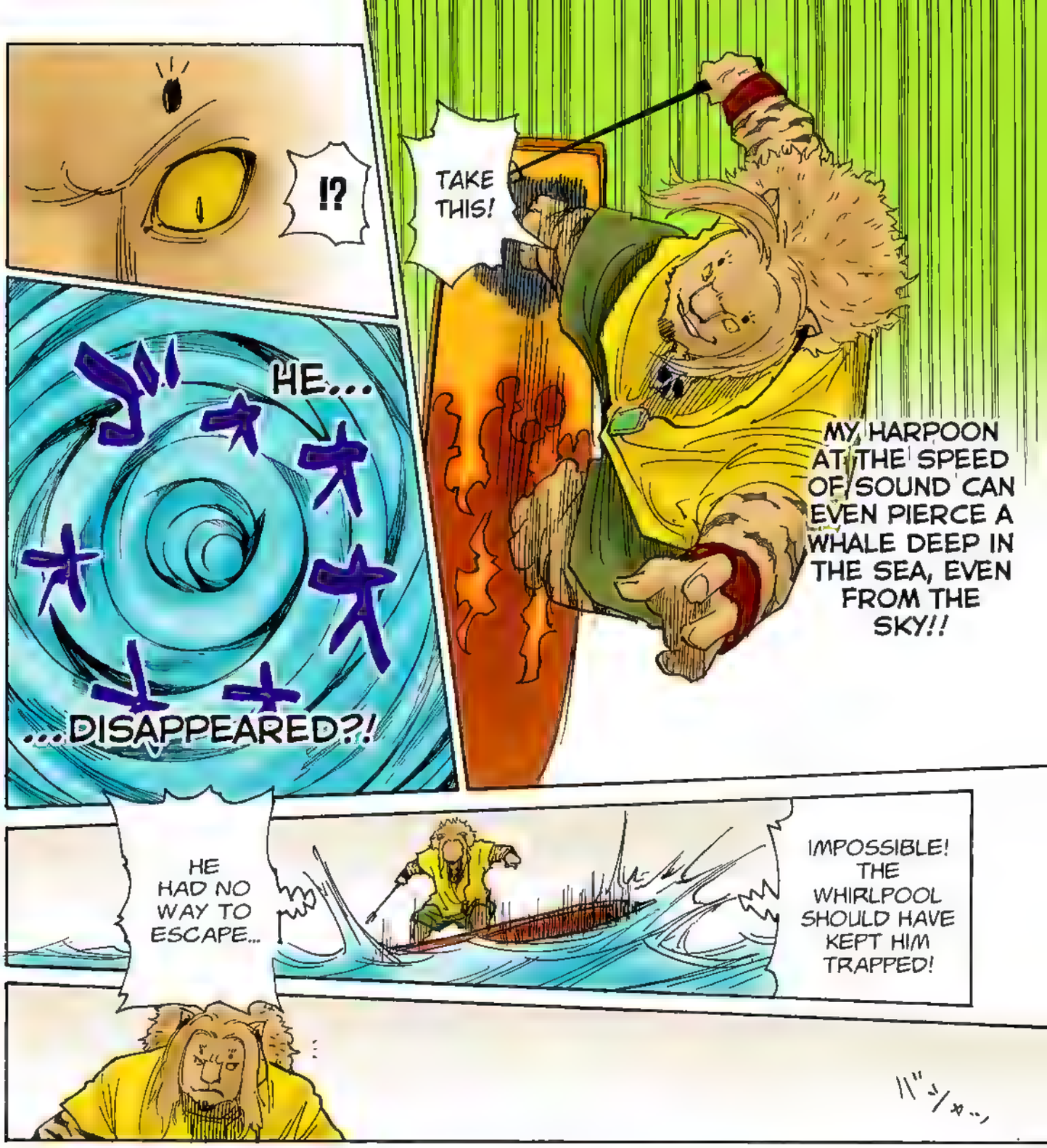
.....
YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE MOVING IN THE WATER, AREN'T YOU?!
HAA HAA!!
YOU'LL DIE QUICKER IF YOU STAY STILL!!
YOU LIKE HOW EASILY MY BOARD MANEUVERS ?!
THAT...
THAT'S NOT YOUR ABILITY.
BELONGED TO MY FRIEND!!

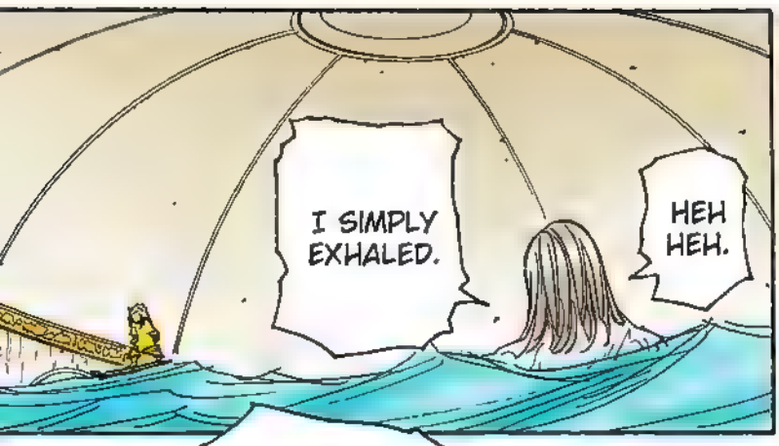

HMPH !!
SO HE CAN RIDE ON TOP OF THE SMOKE.
OH, MAKING A BOAT OUT OF SMOKE...
HAAA!!
HYAA!

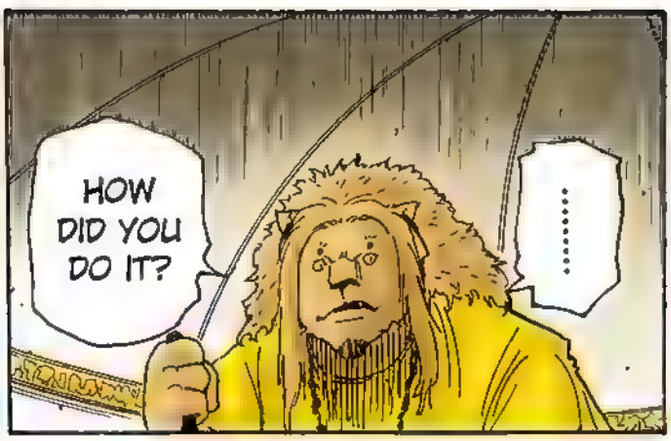
...THAT'S NOT YOUR ABILITY!!
I TOLD YOU...
HA!!
YOU THINK THAT'S ENOUGH TO DEFEAT MY WAVES?!
...IS ONE OF MY ORIGINAL MOVES!
THIS...
!!

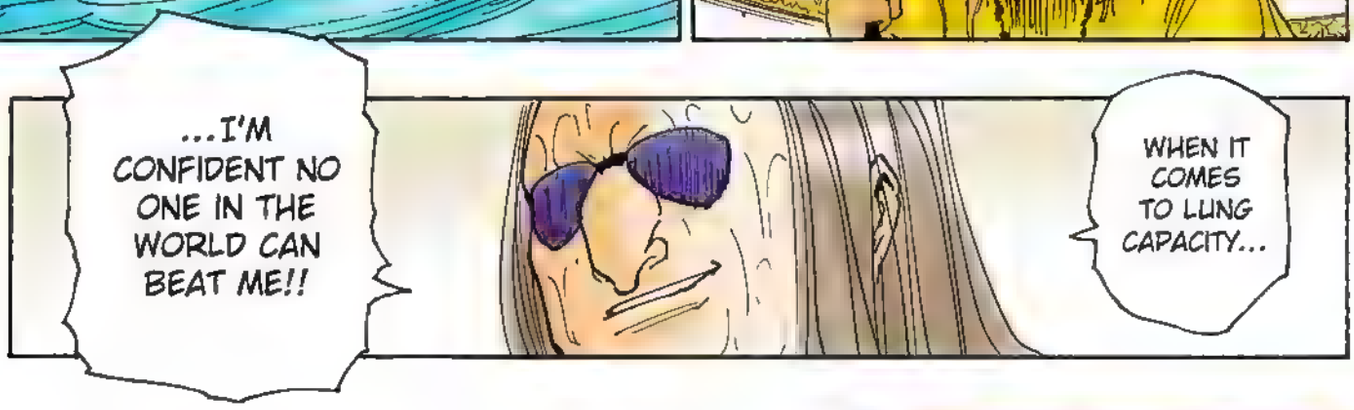
VORTEX: MAEL-STROM!!!
FWOO
GHK!

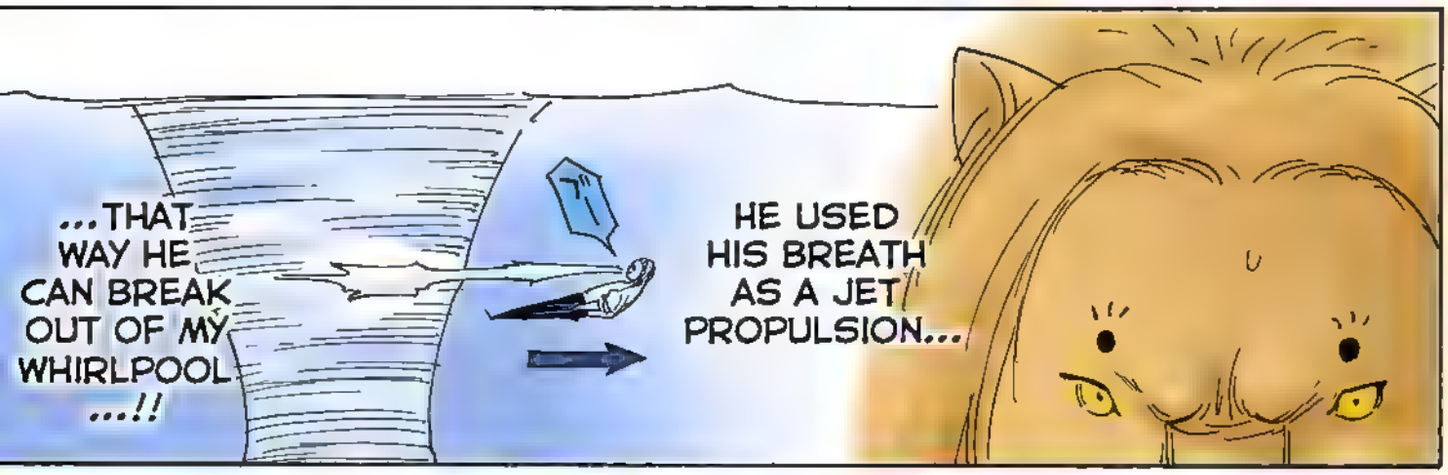

THIS CURRENT IS TOO STRONG !!
GHR!
I CAN'T TELL UP FROM DOWN!! THIS IS BAD!!
I CAN'T MOVE AT ALL!!
I IMMOBILIZE MY OPPONENTS MOVEMENTS WITH A WHIRLPOOL!
THEN, I'LL FINISH HIM OFF WITH A HARPOON FROM ABOVE!!
HERE I GO!!

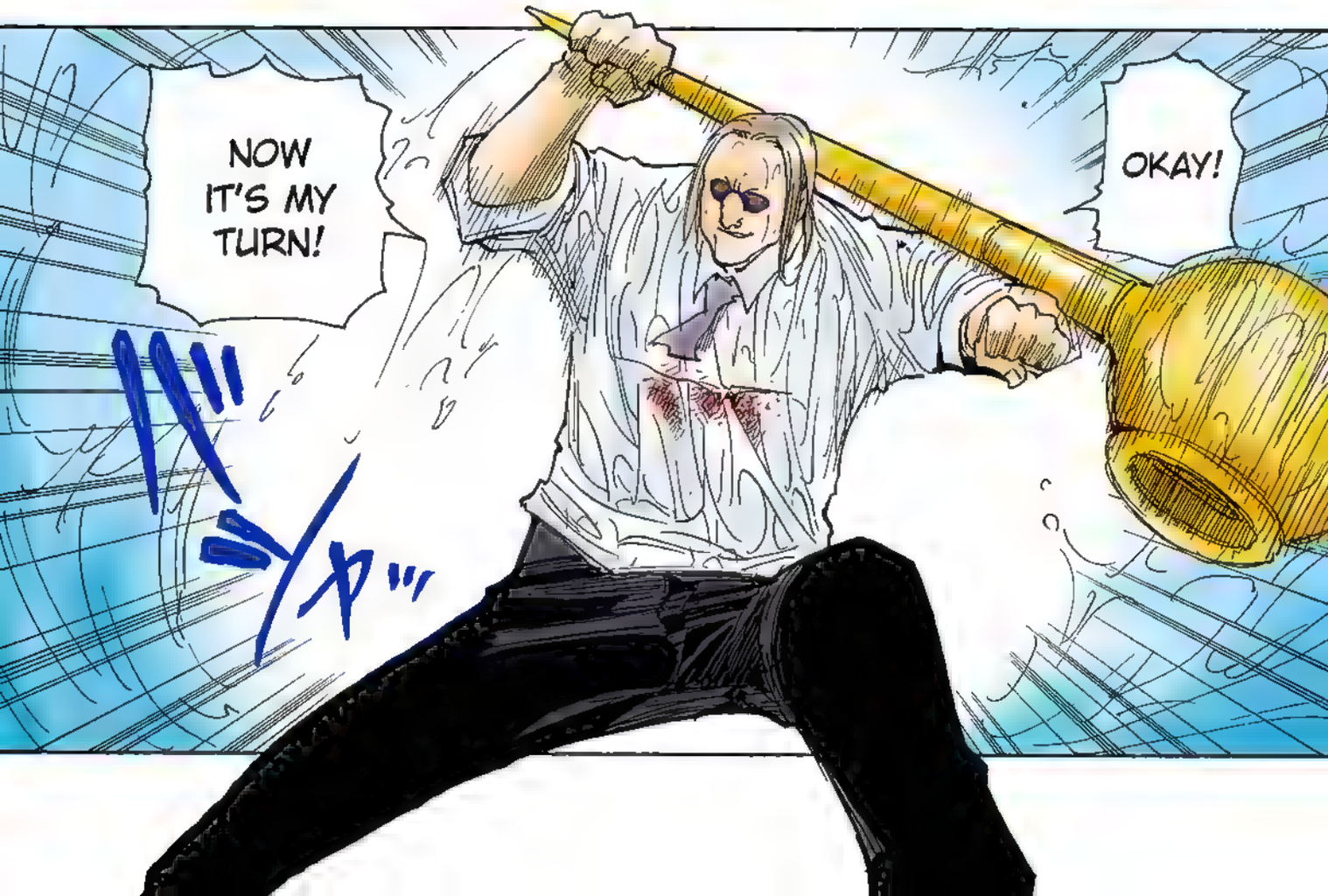

!?
TAKE THIS!
MY HARPOON AT THE SPEED OF SOUND CAN EVEN PIERCE A WHALE DEEP IN THE SEA, EVEN FROM THE SKY!!
HE...
...DISAPPEARED?!
HE HAD NO WAY TO ESCAPE...
IMPOSSIBLE! THE WHIRLPOOL SHOULD HAVE KEPT HIM TRAPPED!


I SIMPLY EXHALED.
HEH HEH.


HOW DID YOU DO IT?
.....


...I'M CONFIDENT NO ONE IN THE WORLD CAN BEAT ME!!
WHEN IT COMES TO LUNG CAPACITY...


...THAT WAY HE CAN BREAK OUT OF MY WHIRLPOOL ...!!
HE USED HIS BREATH AS A JET PROPULSION...


NOW IT'S MY TURN!
OKAY!

"IT'S YOUR TURN?"

ALL YOU GET TO DO IS DROWN IN MY WAVES.

IN THIS BATTLE YOU DON'T GET A TURN.

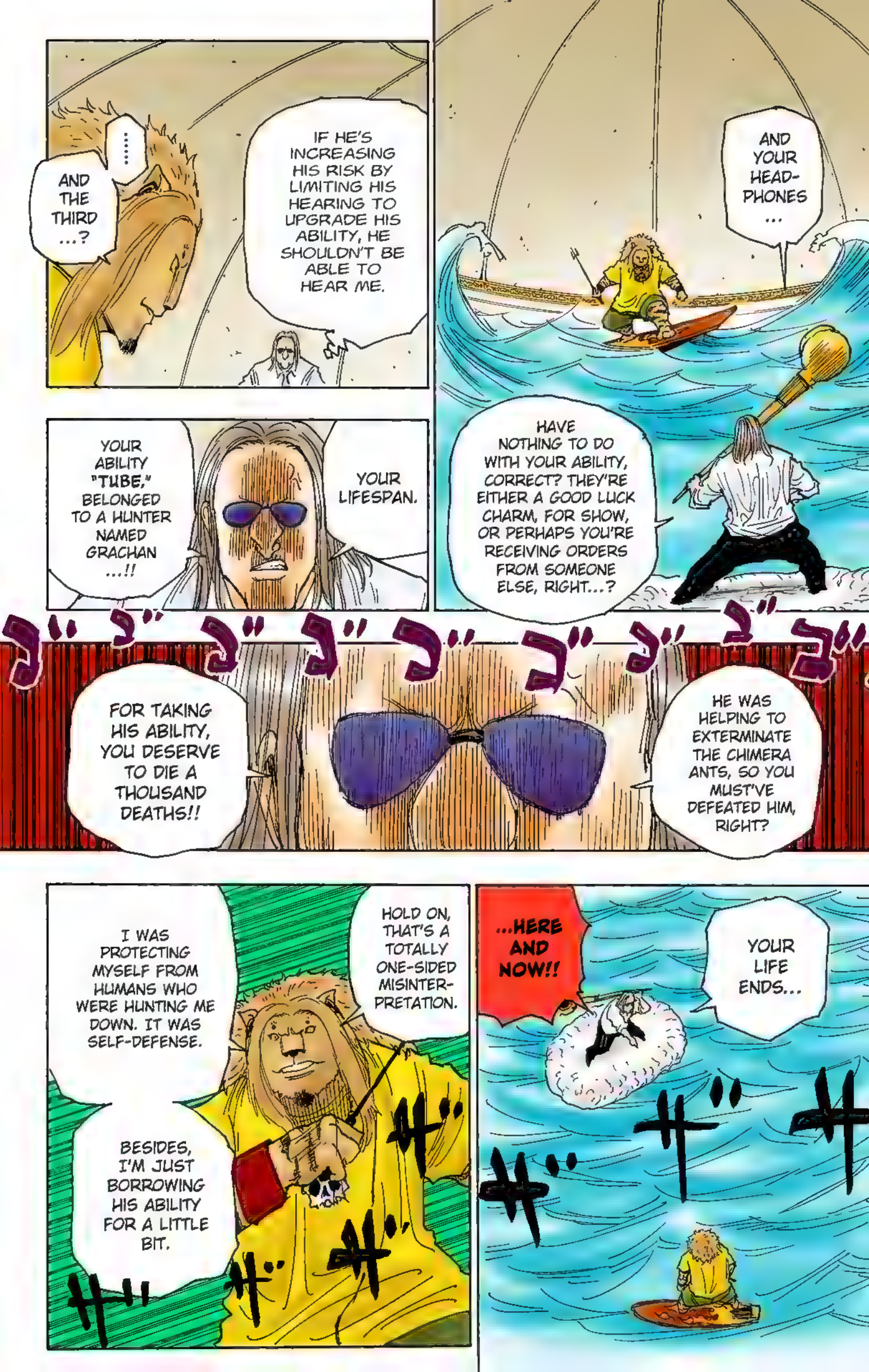
...I'VE LEARNED THREE THINGS.

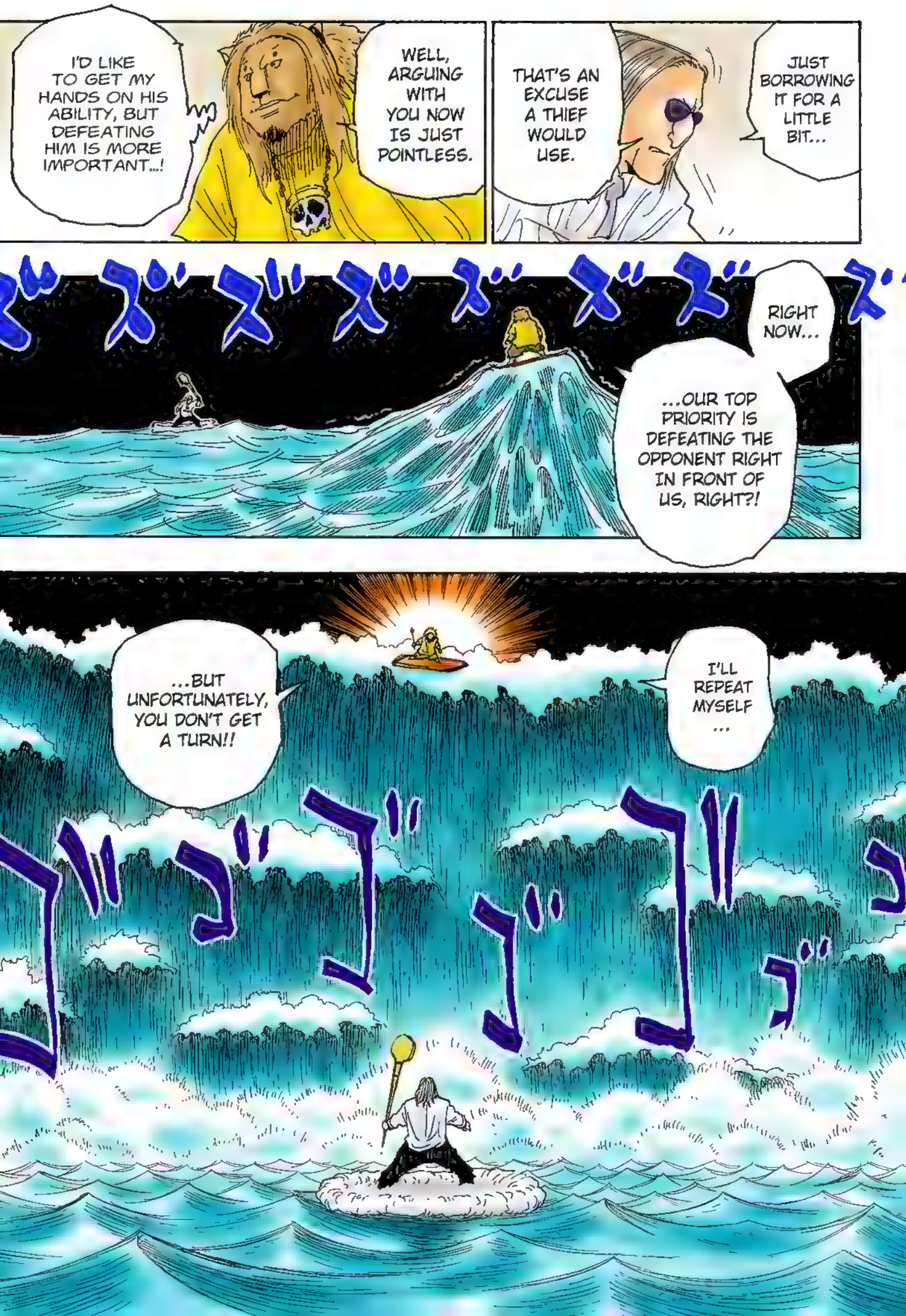
DURING OUR EXCHANGE ...

IT'S ONE THAT USES OTHER PEOPLE'S ABILITIES SOMEHOW.

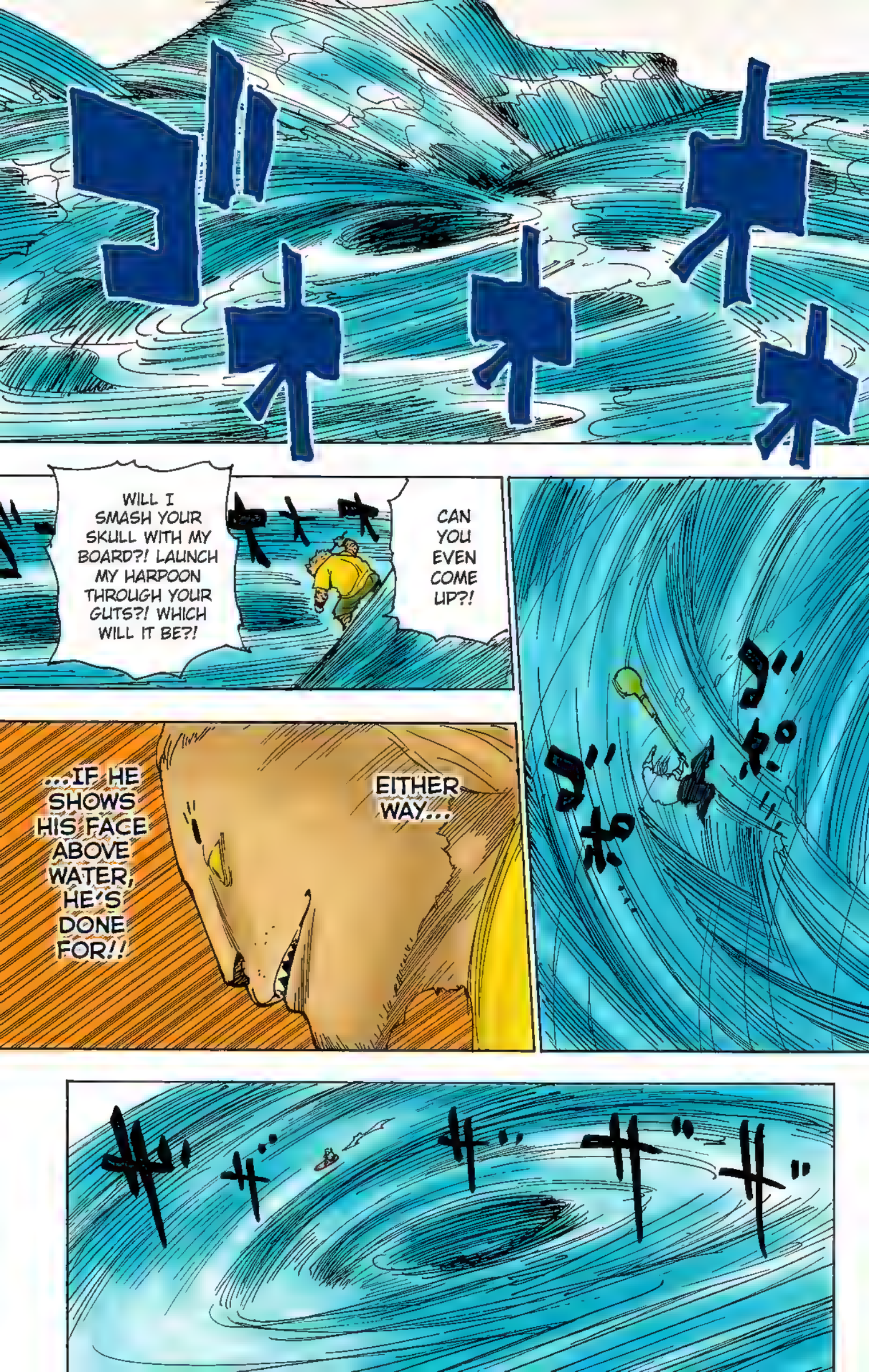
FIRST, I KNOW YOUR ABILITY!!

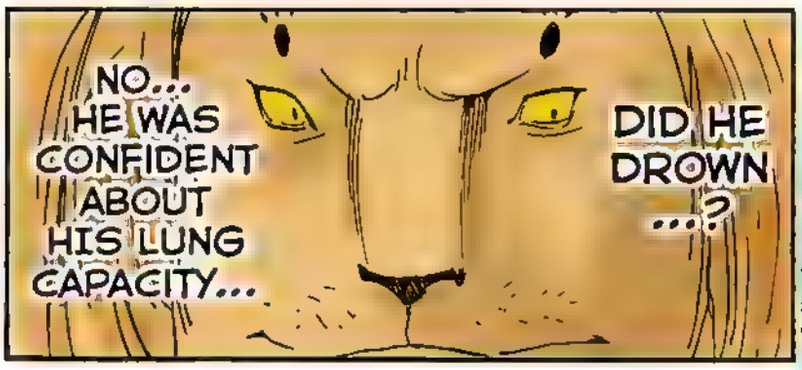
No.254 ◆ 6: PART 11

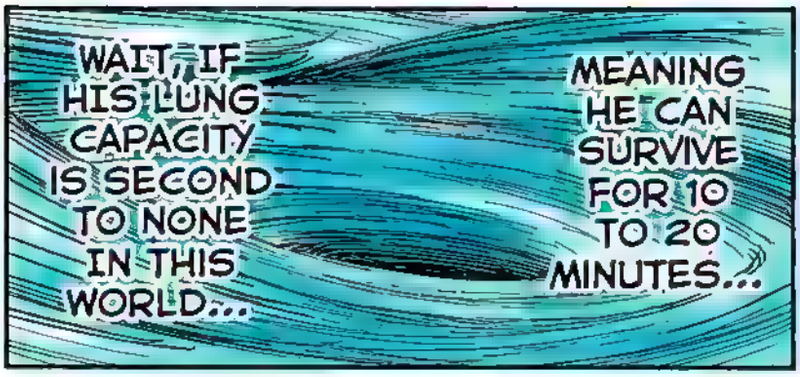

AND THE THIRD ...?
.....
IF HE'S INCREASING HIS RISK BY LIMITING HIS HEARING TO UPGRADE HIS ABILITY, HE SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HEAR ME.
AND YOUR HEAD-PHONES ...
HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR ABILITY, CORRECT? THEY'RE EITHER A GOOD LUCK CHARM, FOR SHOW, OR PERHAPS YOU'RE RECEIVING ORDERS FROM SOMEONE ELSE, RIGHT...?
YOUR ABILITY "TUBE," BELONGED TO A HUNTER NAMED GRACHAN ...!!
YOUR LIFESPAN.
FOR TAKING HIS ABILITY, YOU DESERVE TO DIE A THOUSAND DEATHS!!
HE WAS HELPING TO EXTERMINATE THE CHIMERA ANTS, SO YOU MUST'VE DEFEATED HIM, RIGHT?
I WAS PROTECTING MYSELF FROM HUMANS WHO WERE HUNTING ME DOWN. IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE.
HOLD ON, THAT'S A TOTALLY ONE-SIDED MISINTER-PRETATION.
BESIDES, I'M JUST BORROWING HIS ABILITY FOR A LITTLE BIT.
...HERE AND NOW!!
YOUR LIFE ENDS...

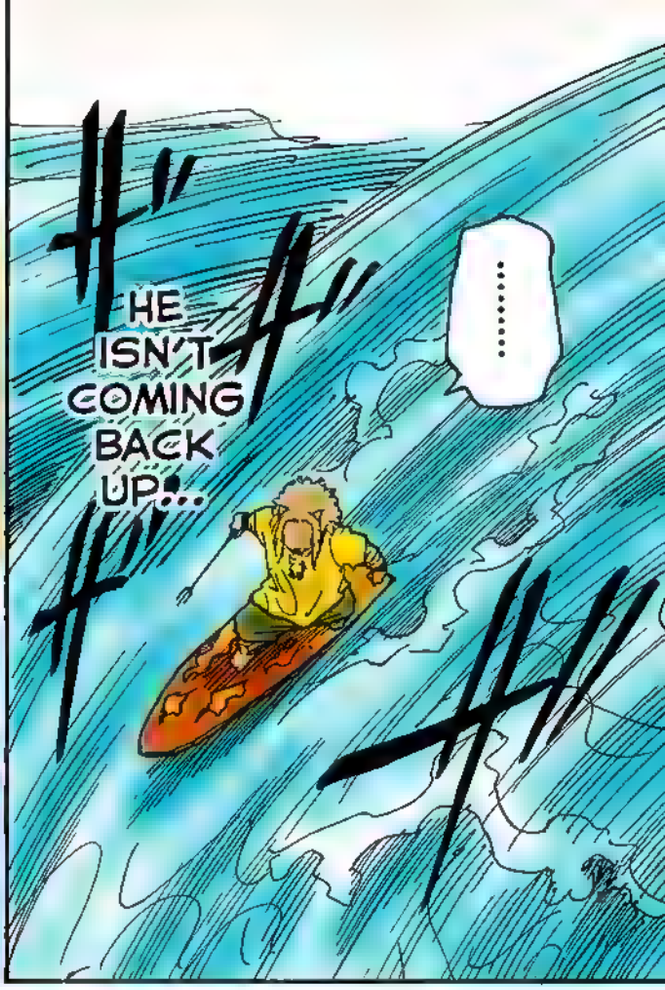

I'D LIKE TO GET MY HANDS ON HIS ABILITY, BUT DEFEATING HIM IS MORE IMPORTANT...!
WELL, ARGUING WITH YOU NOW IS JUST POINTLESS.
THAT'S AN EXCUSE A THIEF WOULD USE.
JUST BORROWING IT FOR A LITTLE BIT...
RIGHT NOW...
...OUR TOP PRIORITY IS DEFEATING THE OPPONENT RIGHT IN FRONT OF US, RIGHT?!
...BUT UNFORTUNATELY, YOU DON'T GET A TURN!!
I'LL REPEAT MYSELF ...

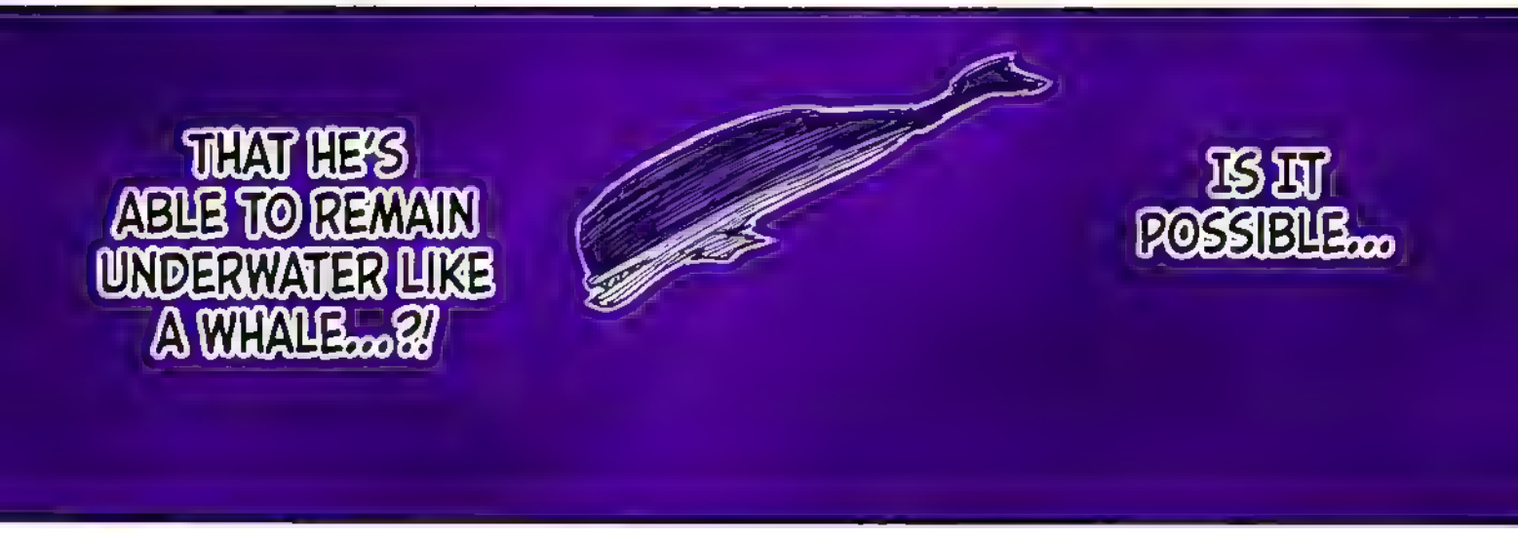
"TSUNAMI: HEAVY POUNDER"!!
FFFT
I'M FLOODING THIS UNDERGROUND CHURCH!! MY WALL OF WATER'S GONNA SUCK YOU IN!!
JUST TRY AND FIND YOUR WAY TO THE SURFACE!!

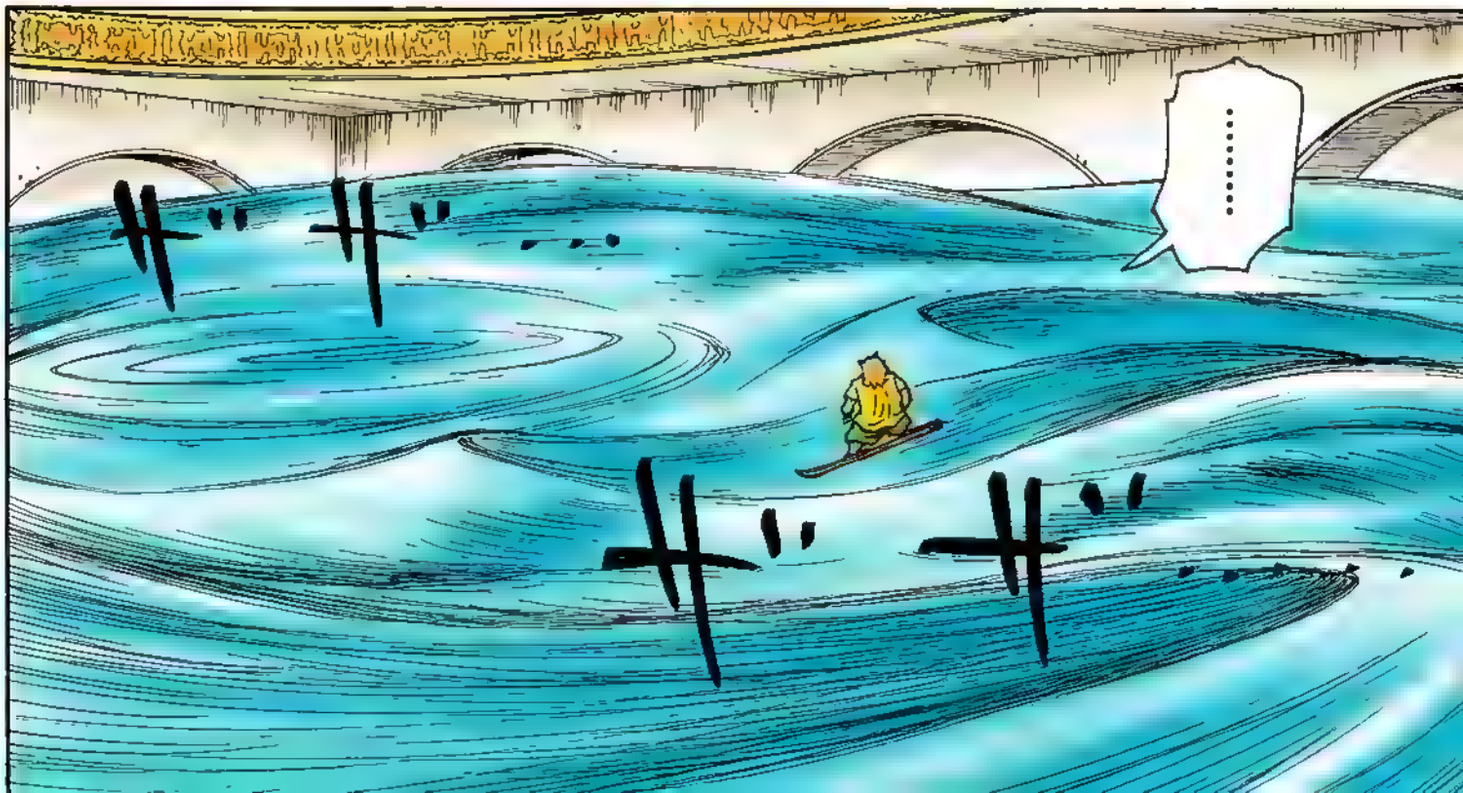

WILL I SMASH YOUR SKULL WITH MY BOARD?! LAUNCH MY HARPOON THROUGH YOUR GUTS?! WHICH WILL IT BE?!
CAN YOU EVEN COME UP?!
...IF HE SHOWS HIS FACE ABOVE WATER, HE'S DONE FOR!!
EITHER WAY...


NO... HE WAS CONFIDENT ABOUT HIS LUNG CAPACITY...
DID HE DROWN ...?


WAIT, IF HIS LUNG CAPACITY IS SECOND TO NONE IN THIS WORLD...
MEANING HE CAN SURVIVE FOR 10 TO 20 MINUTES...


HE ISN'T COMING BACK UP...
.....


THAT HE'S ABLE TO REMAIN UNDERWATER LIKE A WHALE...?!
IS IT POSSIBLE...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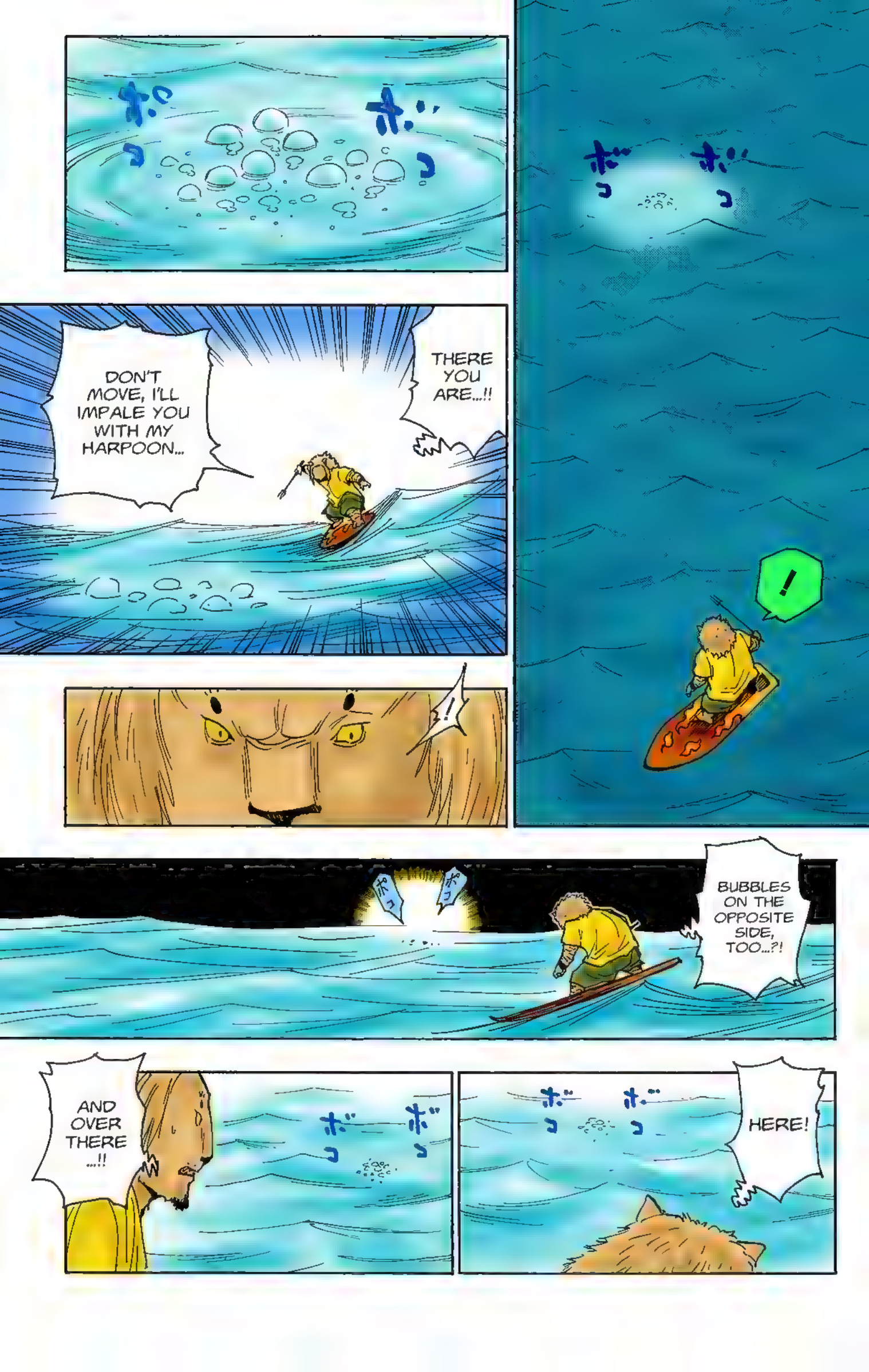
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!
DON'T MOVE, I'LL IMPALE YOU WITH MY HARPOON...
THERE YOU ARE...!!
!
ボコ
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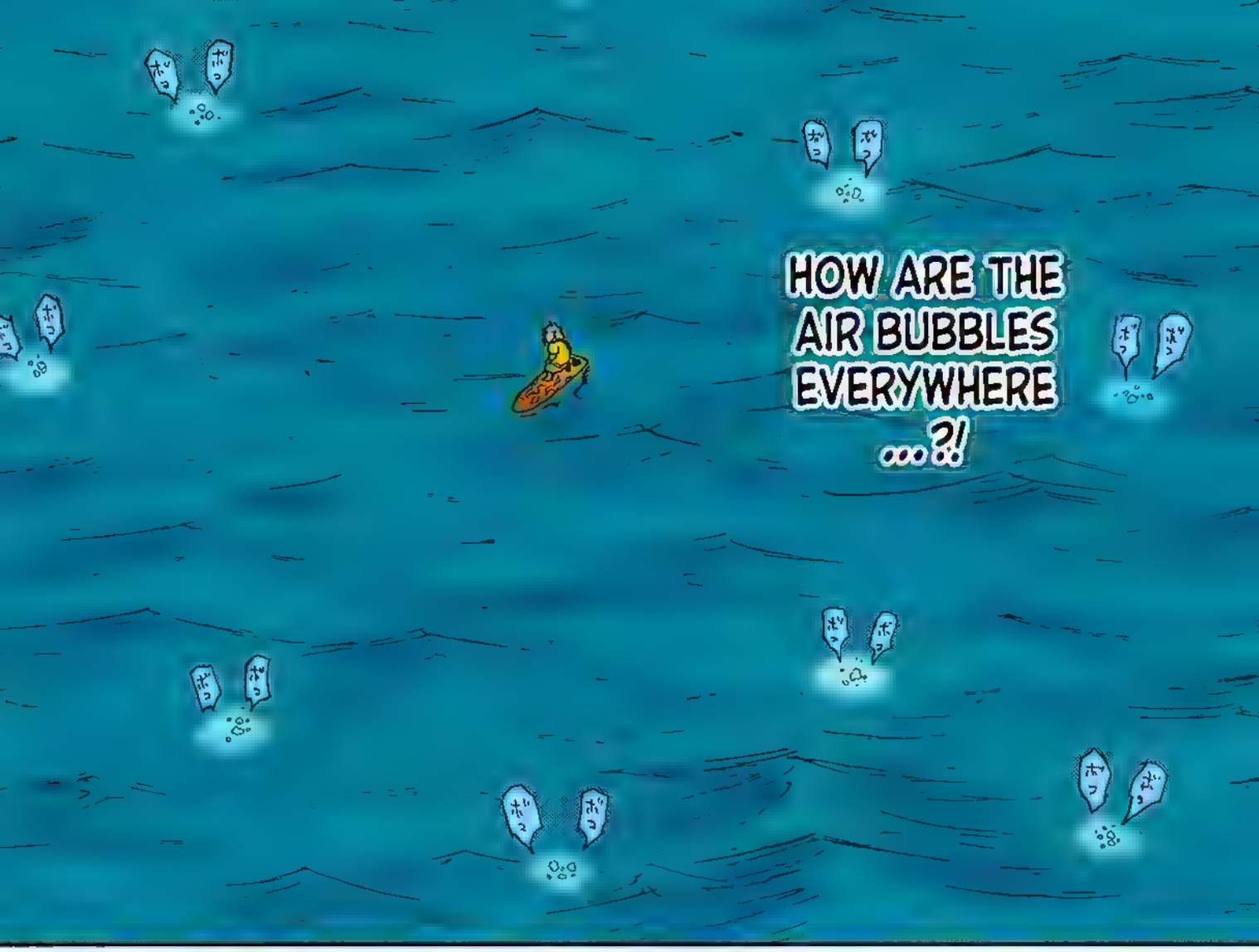
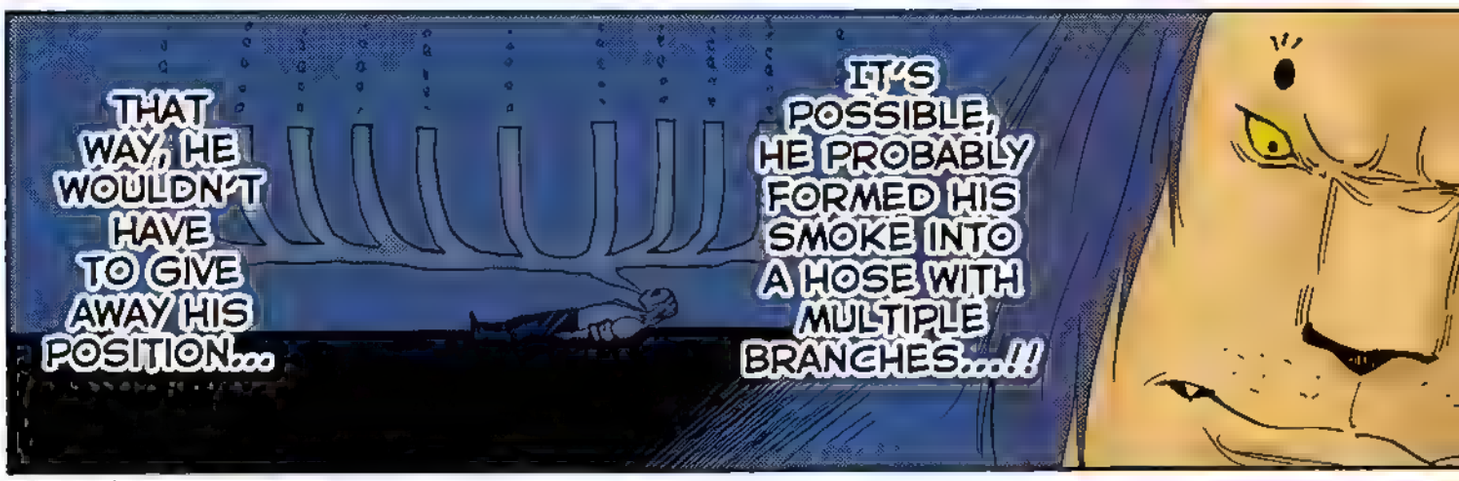
BUBBLES ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE, TOO...?!
AND OVER THERE ...!!
ボコ
ボコ
ボコ
ボコ
HERE!


HOW ARE THE AIR BUBBLES EVERYWHERE ...?!


THAT WAY, HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO GIVE AWAY HIS POSITION...
IT'S POSSIBLE, HE PROBABLY FORMED HIS SMOKE INTO A HOSE WITH MULTIPLE BRANCHES...!!

DO YOU EXPECT ME TO GIVE UP AND DRAIN THE WATER?
HEY!! HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA STAY UNDER?!
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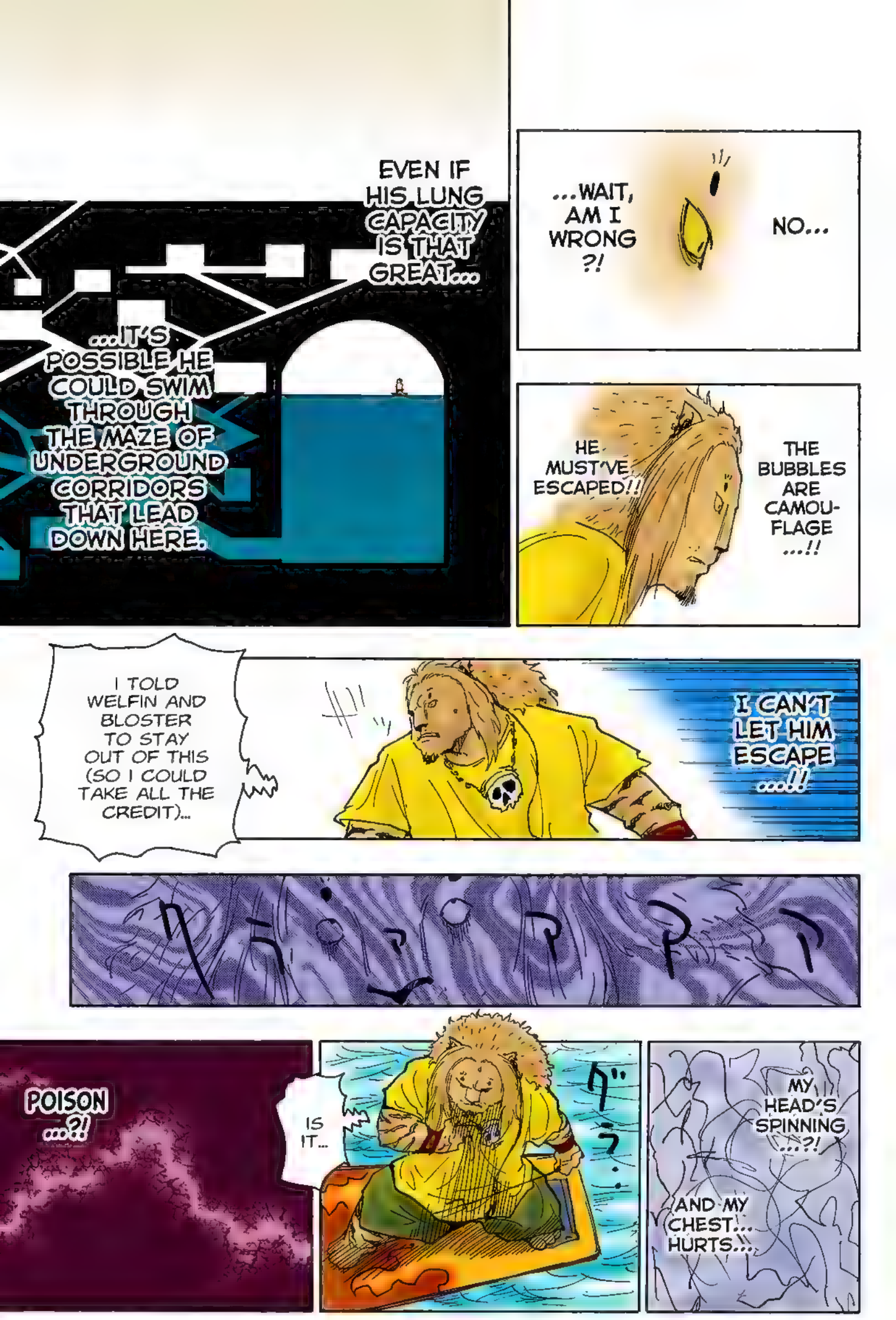
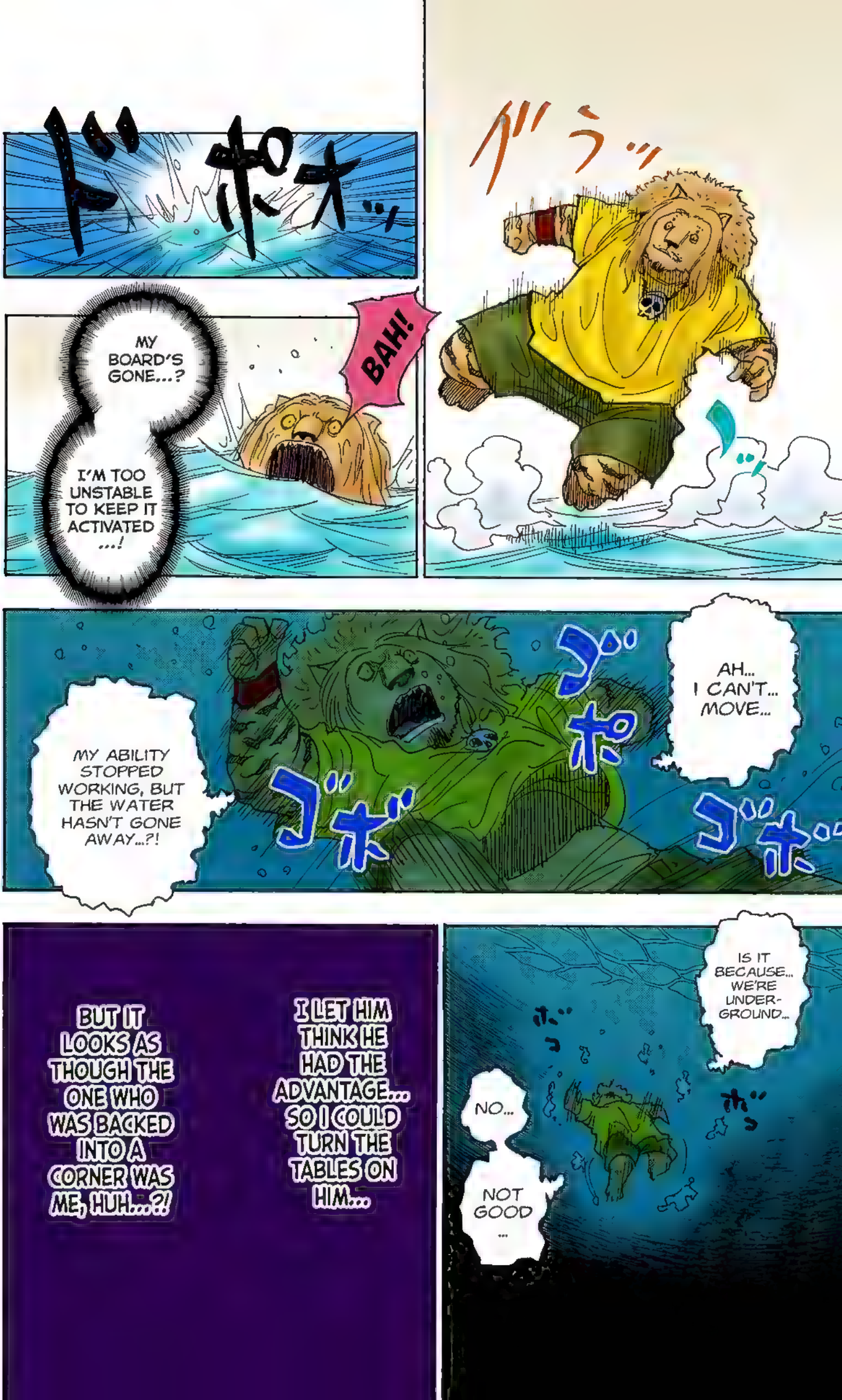

EVEN IF HIS LUNG CAPACITY IS THAT GREAT...
...IT'S POSSIBLE HE COULD SWIM THROUGH THE MAZE OF UNDERGROUND CORRIDORS THAT LEAD DOWN HERE.
...WAIT, AM I WRONG ?!
NO...
HE MUST'VE ESCAPED!!
THE BUBBLES ARE CAMOU-FLAGE ...!!
I TOLD WELFIN AND BLOSTER TO STAY OUT OF THIS (SO I COULD TAKE ALL THE CREDIT)...
I CAN'T LET HIM ESCAPE ...!!
POISON ...?!
IS IT...
MY HEAD'S SPINNING ...?!
AND MY CHEST... HURTS...


ドボボボッ
MY BOARD'S GONE...?
I'M TOO UNSTABLE TO KEEP IT ACTIVATED ...!
BAH!
グラッ
MY ABILITY STOPPED WORKING, BUT THE WATER HASN'T GONE AWAY...?!
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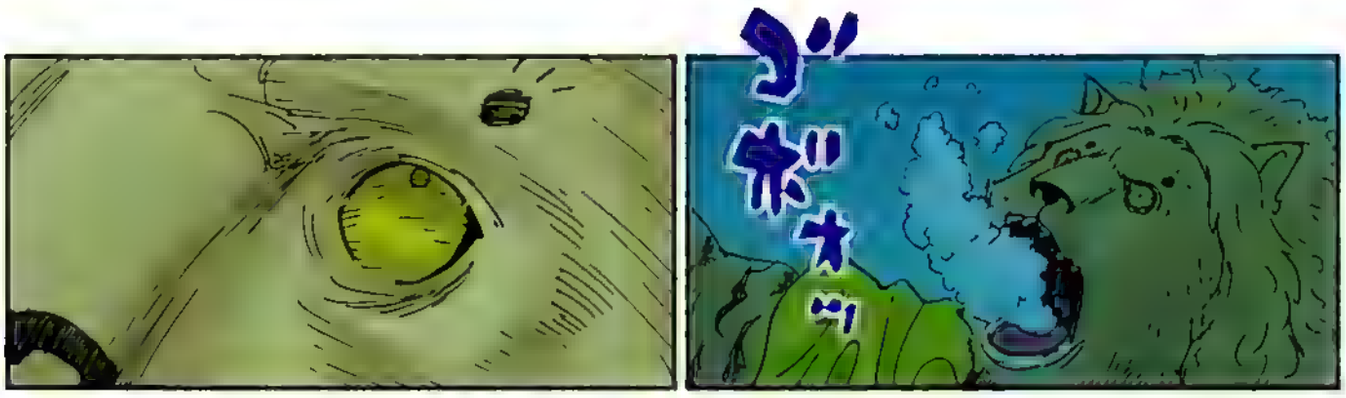
AH... I CAN'T... MOVE...
BUT IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE ONE WHO WAS BACKED INTO A CORNER WAS ME, HUH...?!
I LET HIM THINK HE HAD THE ADVANTAGE... SO I COULD TURN THE TABLES ON HIM...
IS IT BECAUSE... WE'RE UNDER-GROUND...
NO...
NOT GOOD ...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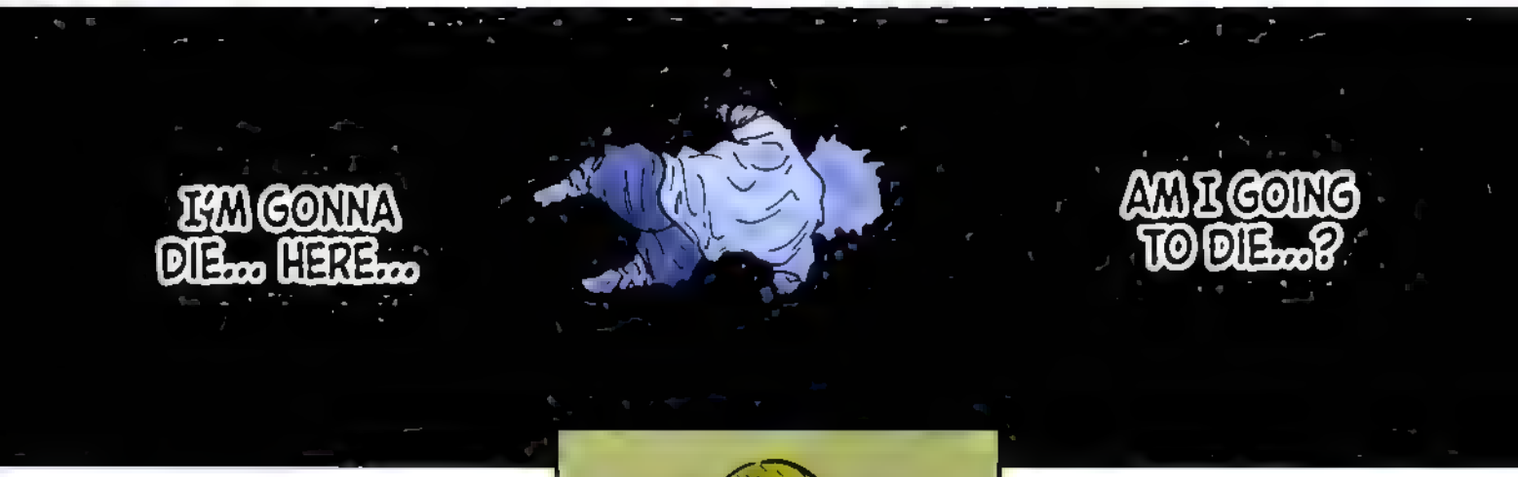
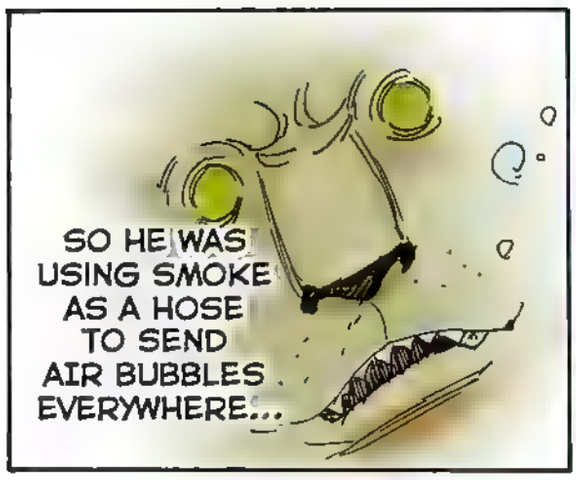
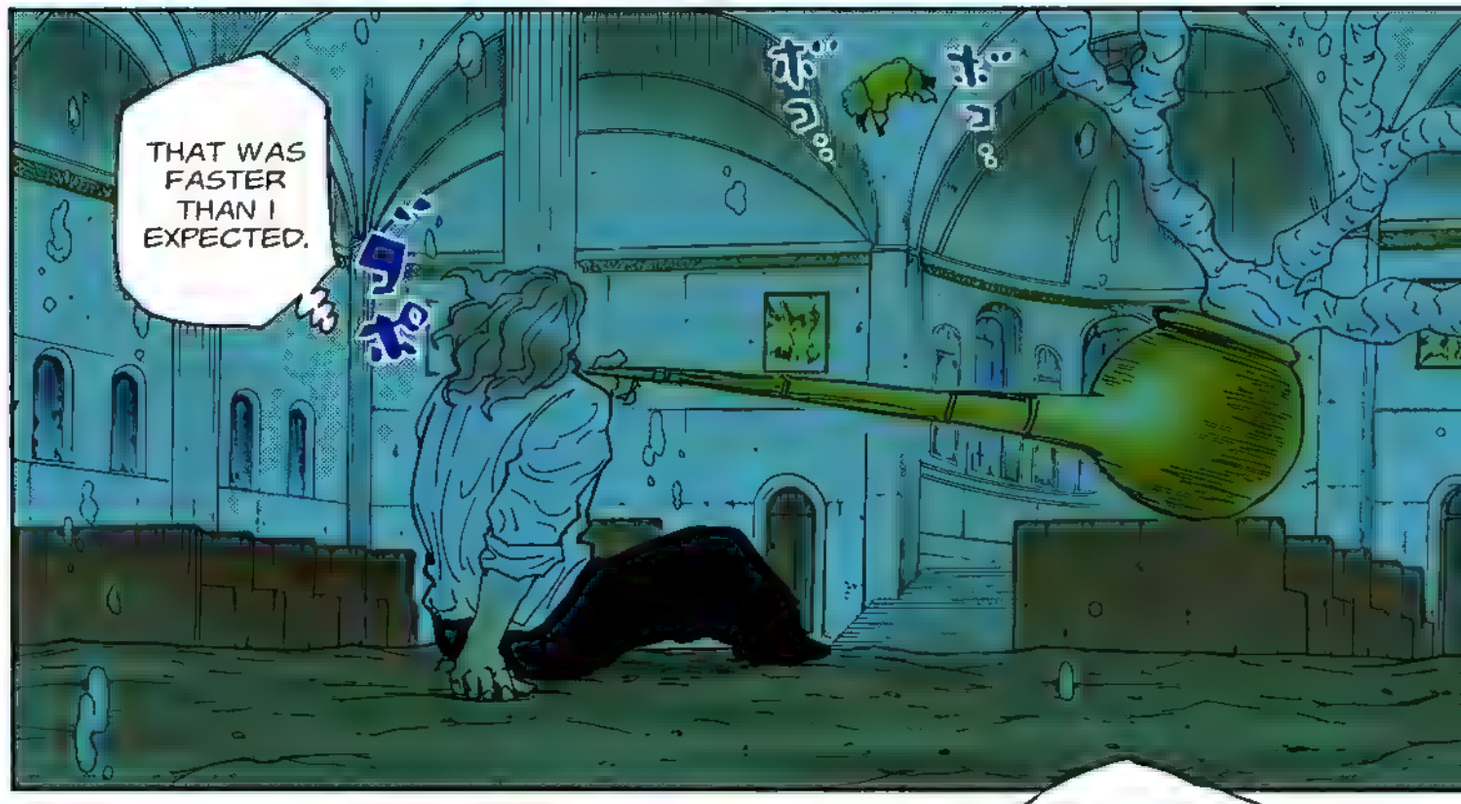

I'M GONNA DIE... HERE...
AM I GOING TO DIE...?

!


SO HE WAS USING SMOKE AS A HOSE TO SEND AIR BUBBLES EVERYWHERE...

POISON IS THIS...?
BUT... WHAT KIND OF...


THAT WAS FASTER THAN I EXPECTED.
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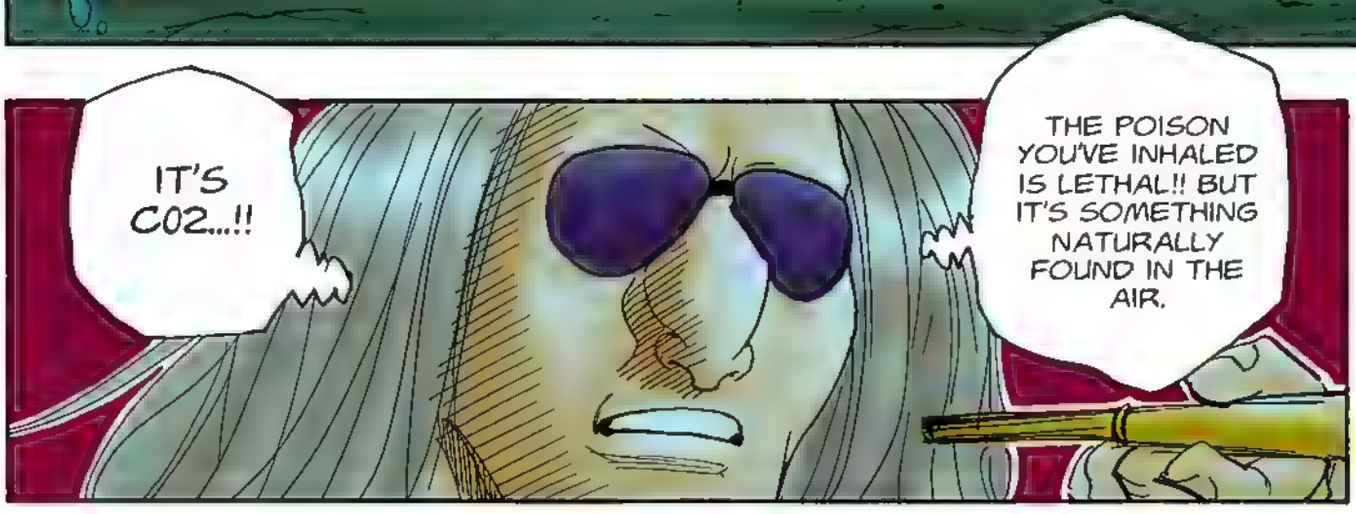
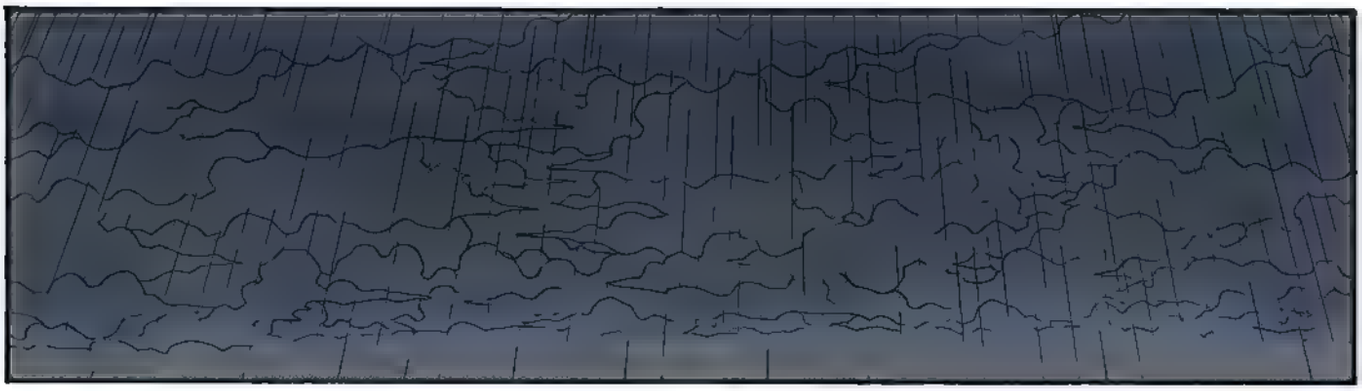
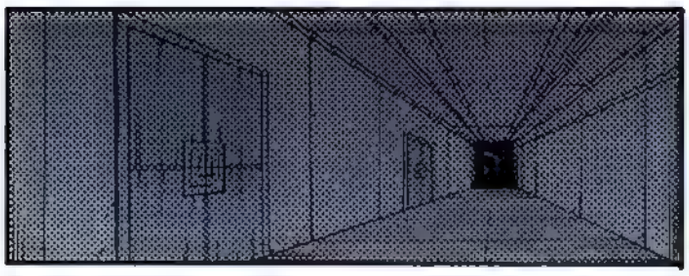

IT'S CO2...!!
THE POISON YOU'VE INHALED IS LETHAL!! BUT IT'S SOMETHING NATURALLY FOUND IN THE AIR.

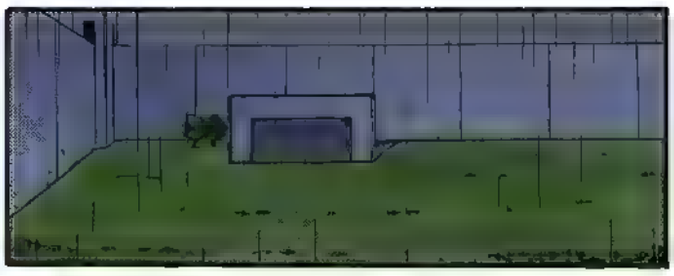
CARBON DIOXIDE COMPRISES ONLY ABOUT 0.03% OF THE ATMOSPHERE, BUT AS CONCENTRATION INCREASES, IT QUICKLY BECOMES TOXIC. AT 1% RESPIRATION AND BLOOD CIRCULATION ARE AFFECTED. AT 5%, IT CAUSES SYMPTOMS SUCH AS HEADACHE, HEART PALPITATIONS AND AN INCREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE. AT 20%, DEATH CAN OCCUR WITHIN SECONDS.

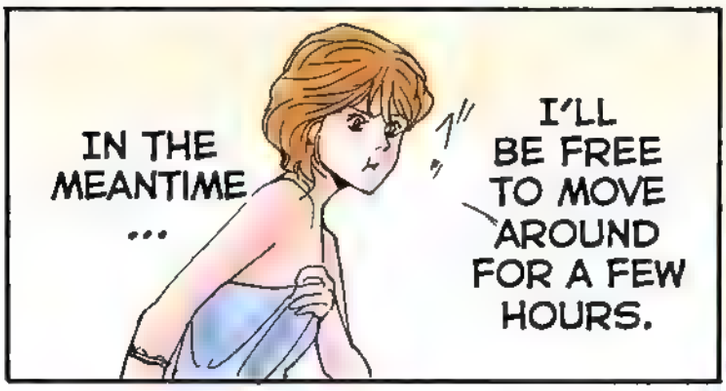
CARBON DIOXIDE

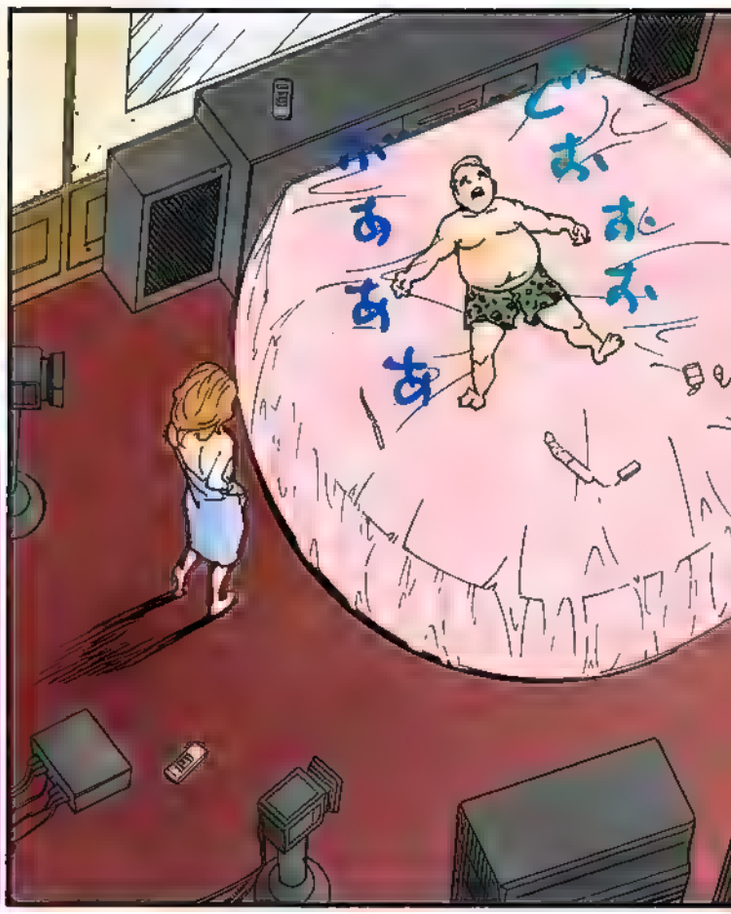
ANY LIVING THING BREATHES IN AIR, TAKING IN OXYGEN AND BREATHING OUT WASTE PRODUCTS, INCLUDING CARBON DIOXIDE.








IN THE MEANTIME ...
I'LL BE FREE TO MOVE AROUND FOR A FEW HOURS.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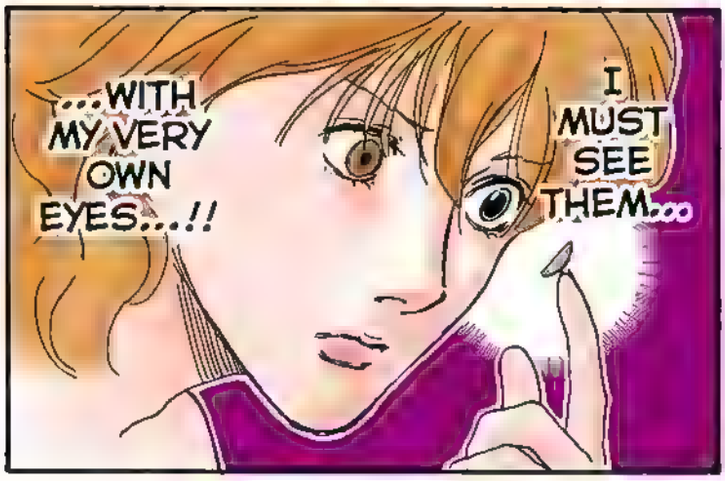
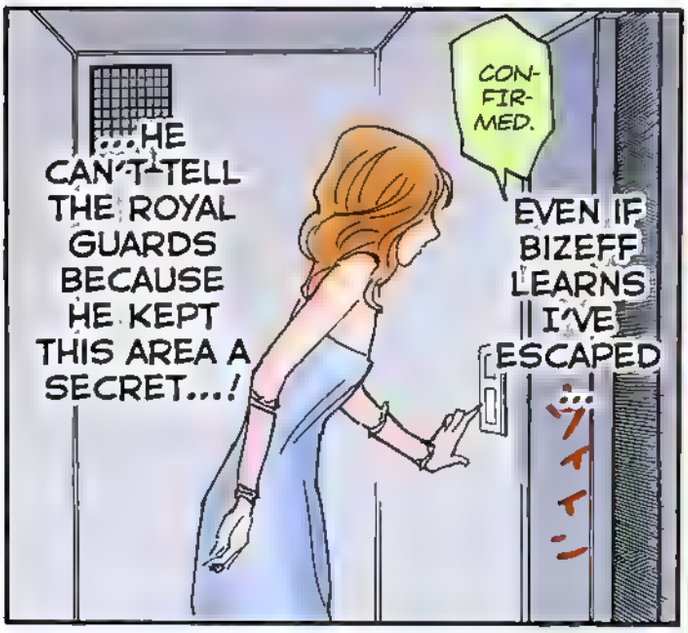

...WITH MY VERY OWN EYES...!!
I MUST SEE THEM...


...HE CAN'T TELL THE ROYAL GUARDS BECAUSE HE KEPT THIS AREA A SECRET...!
CON-FIR-MED.
EVEN IF BIZEFF LEARNS I'VE ESCAPED...
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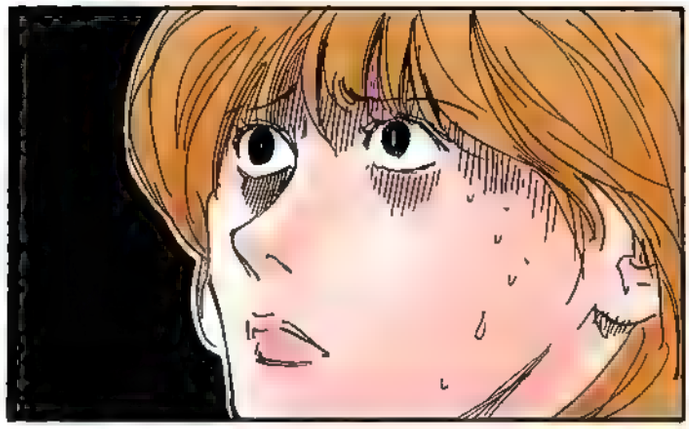
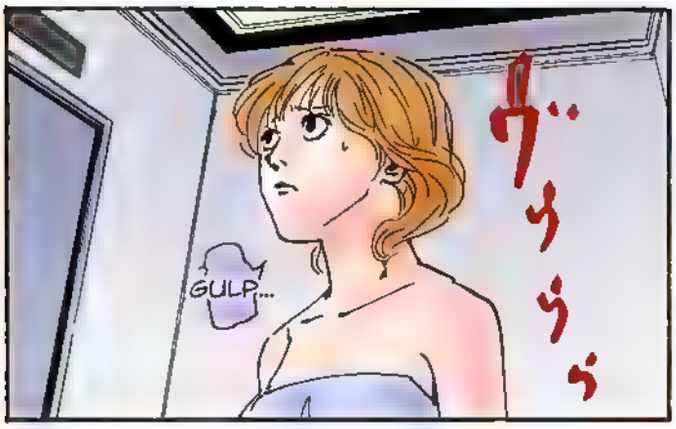
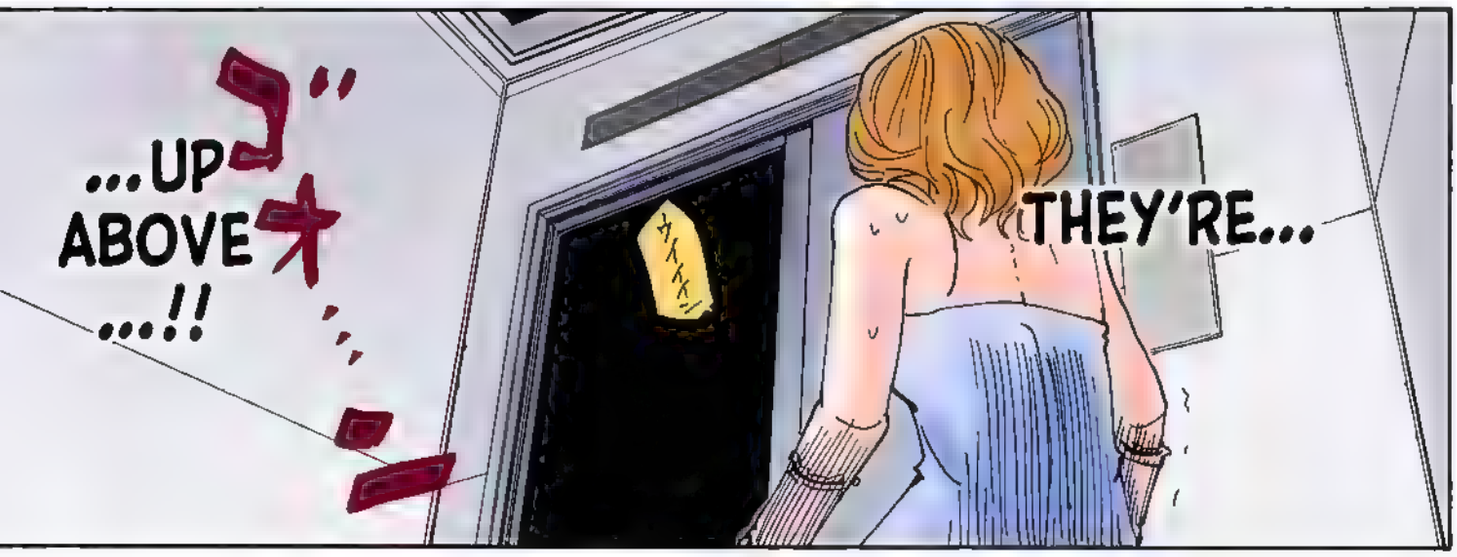
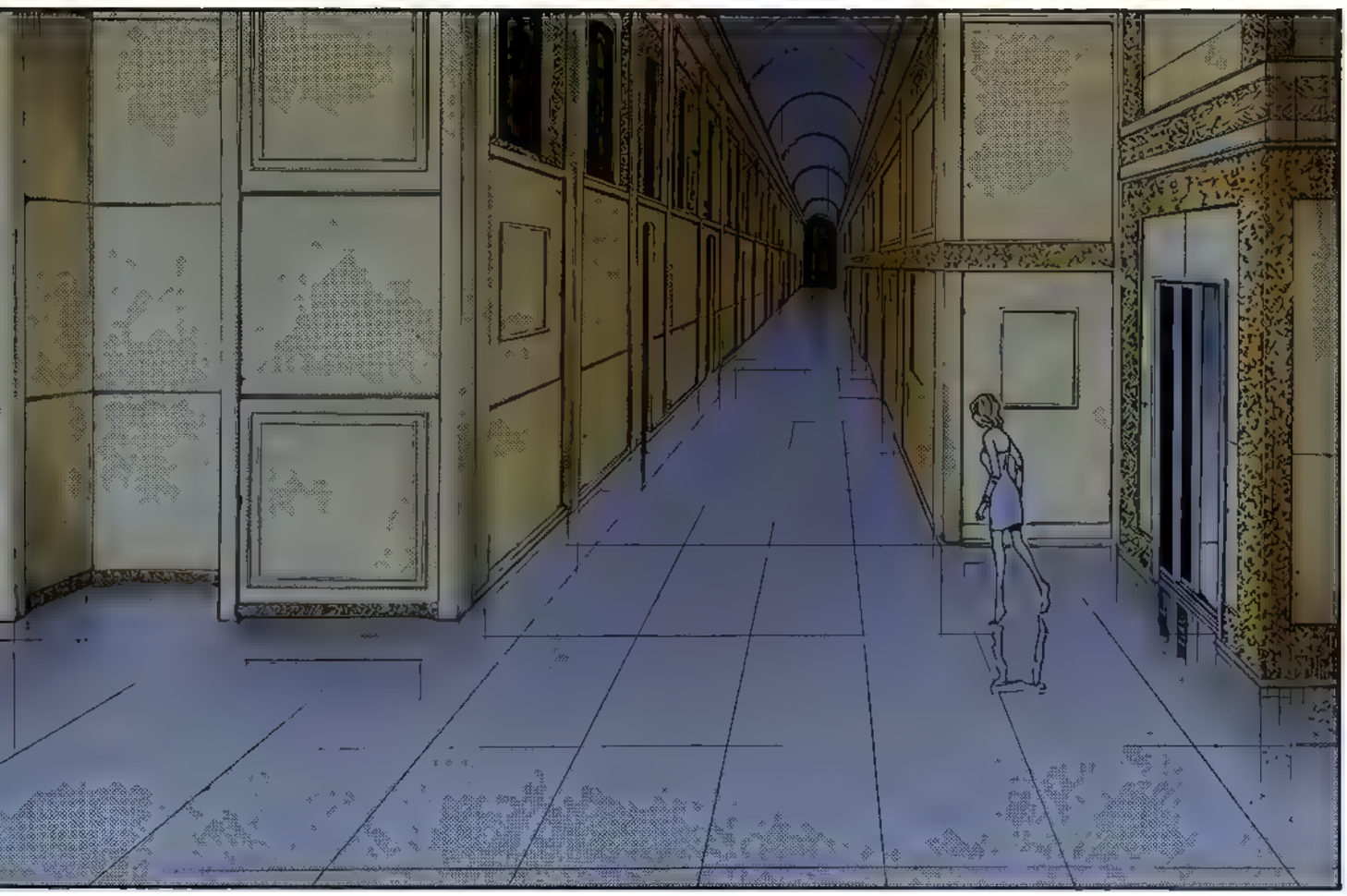
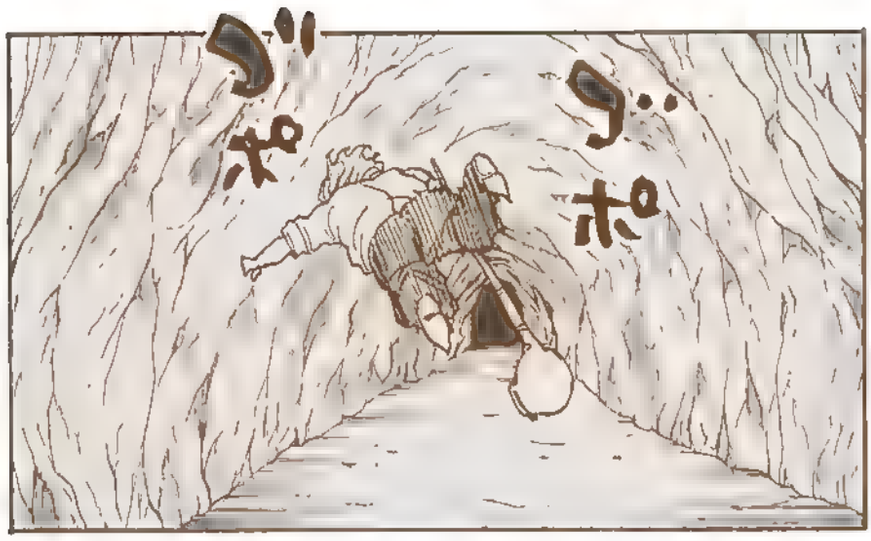
I KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE FROM HERE NOW.
I'VE OBSERVED BIZEFF'S MOVEMENTS WITH MY CRYSTAL BALL...




GULP...
ゲゥゥゥ


...UP ABOVE ...!!
ゴォォォ
THEY'RE...

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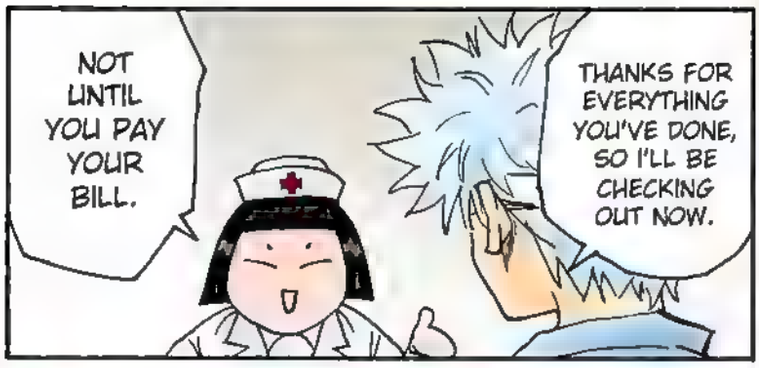
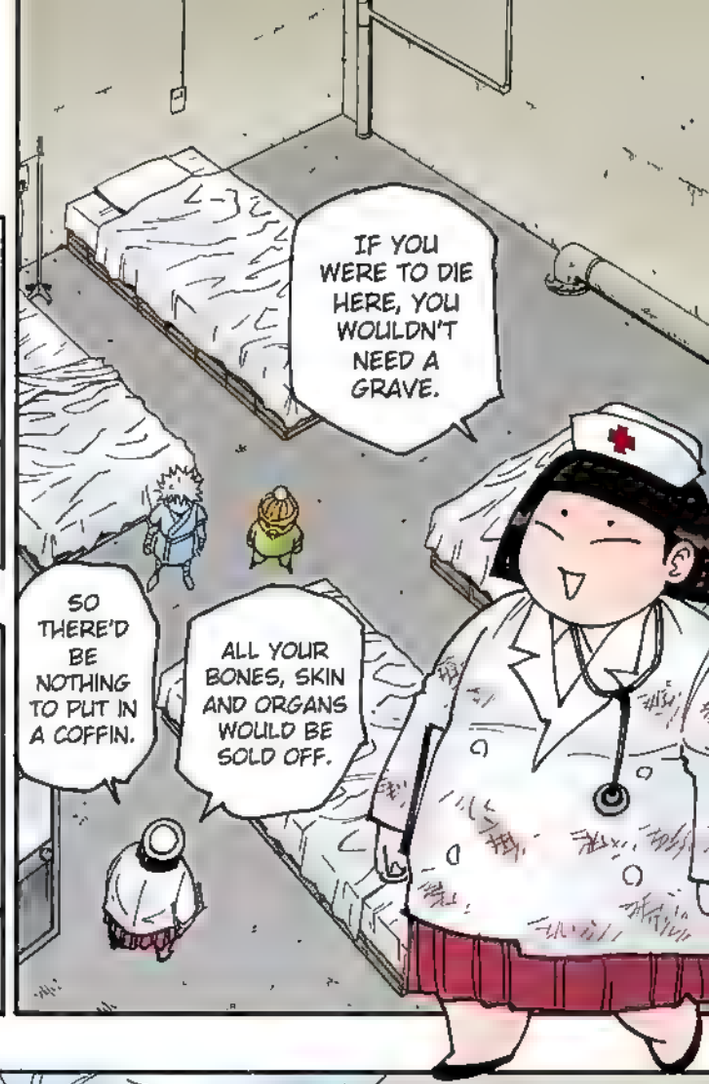
No.255 ◆ 5: PART ① - 2: PART ①

No.255 ◆
5: PART ① - 2: PART ①

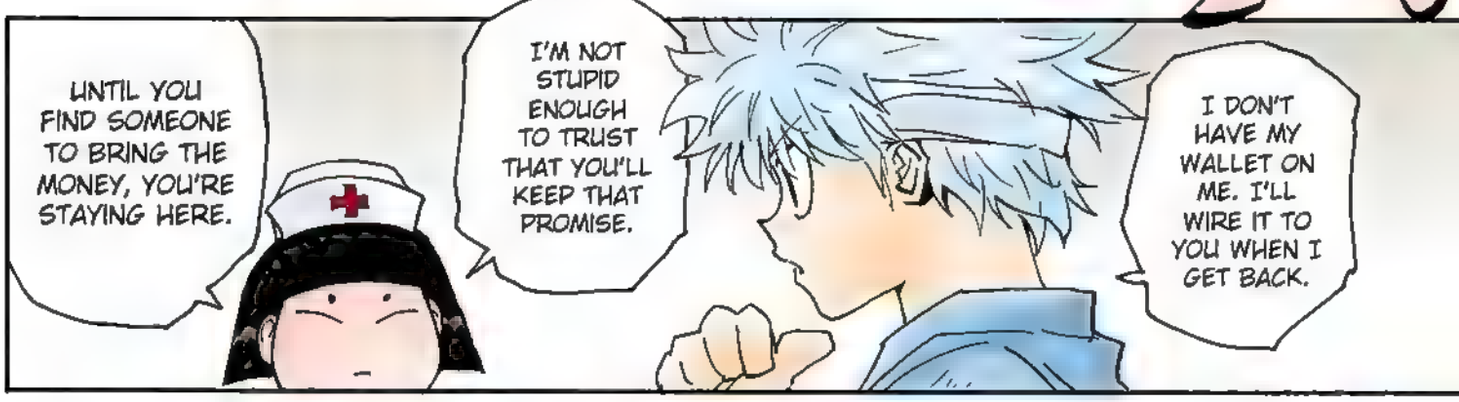
OH!
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
DON'T CALL ME THAT!!
WHERE AM I?! HOW LONG WAS I OUT FOR?!
OCTO-PUS?!
!!
.....

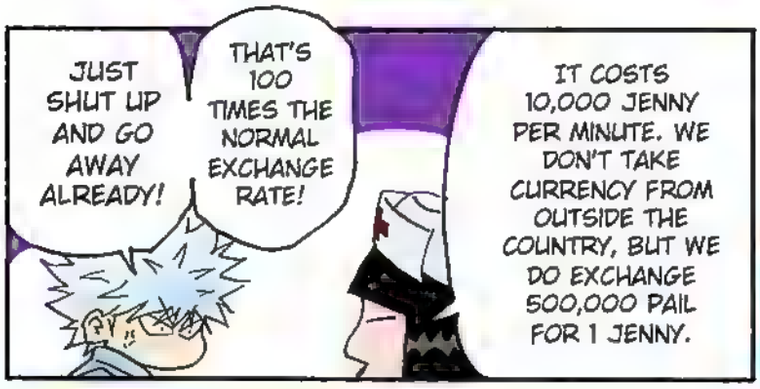
THIS IS AN UNDER-GROUND HOSPITAL.
FOR FOLKS WITH ROOTS IN THE UNDERWORLD LIKE THE MAFIA.
YOU WERE OUT FOR A WHOLE 2 DAYS.
I HAVE TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THE PLAN...!!
DON'T GO PUSHING YOURSELF, OR ELSE YOUR WOUNDS WILL REOPEN!!
HEY, HEY!!
TWO DAYS...?! I GOTTA GET GOING!
YOU WERE JUST ON THE VERGE OF DEATH...
FOOL!
ガチャ
OH, YOU'RE AWAKE.
YOU NEED A FEW DAYS BEFORE...

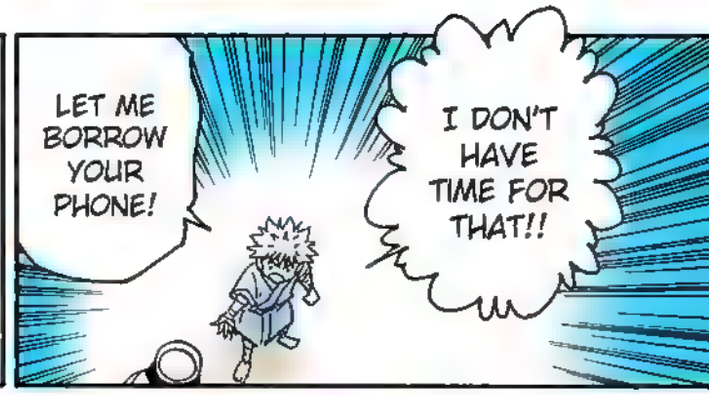

NOT UNTIL YOU PAY YOUR BILL.
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE, SO I'LL BE CHECKING OUT NOW.

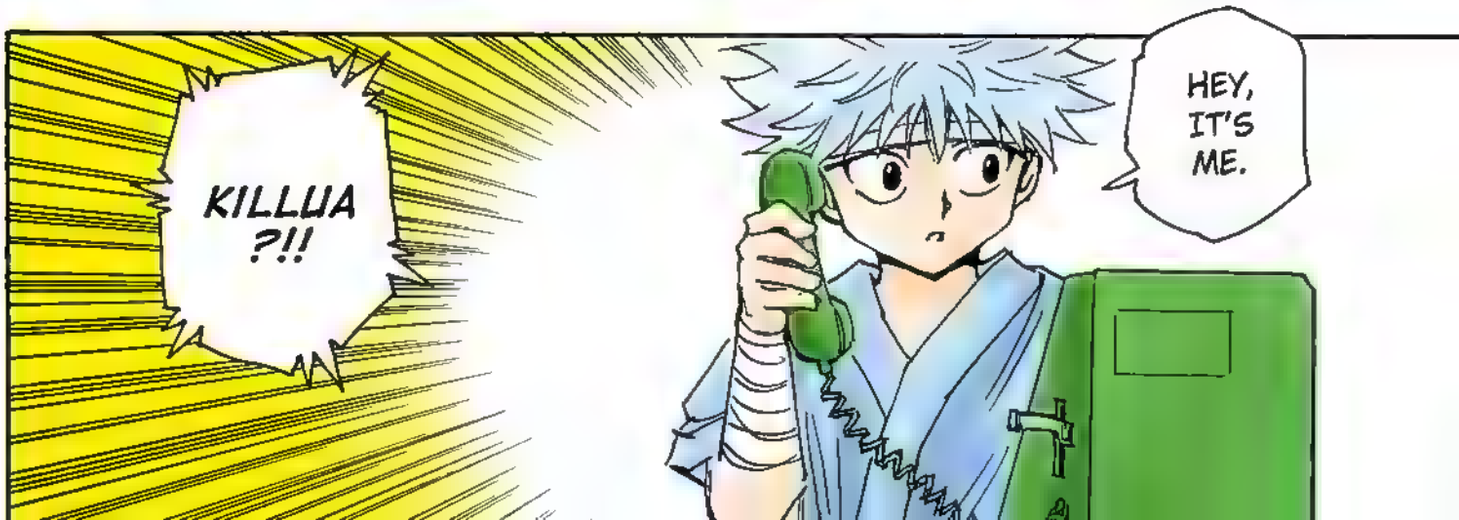

IF YOU WERE TO DIE HERE, YOU WOULDN'T NEED A GRAVE.
SO THERE'D BE NOTHING TO PUT IN A COFFIN.
ALL YOUR BONES, SKIN AND ORGANS WOULD BE SOLD OFF.

IF YOU CAN'T PAY, I'LL TAKE BODY PARTS AS PAYMENT INSTEAD.
THE EXPENSES FOR THE BED, TRANSFUSIONS, BLOOD, I.V, MEDICINE, ANTISEPTICS, STITCHES, ETC. YOUR TOTAL IS 1.8 MILLION JENNY.


UNTIL YOU FIND SOMEONE TO BRING THE MONEY, YOU'RE STAYING HERE.
I'M NOT STUPID ENOUGH TO TRUST THAT YOU'LL KEEP THAT PROMISE.
I DON'T HAVE MY WALLET ON ME. I'LL WIRE IT TO YOU WHEN I GET BACK.

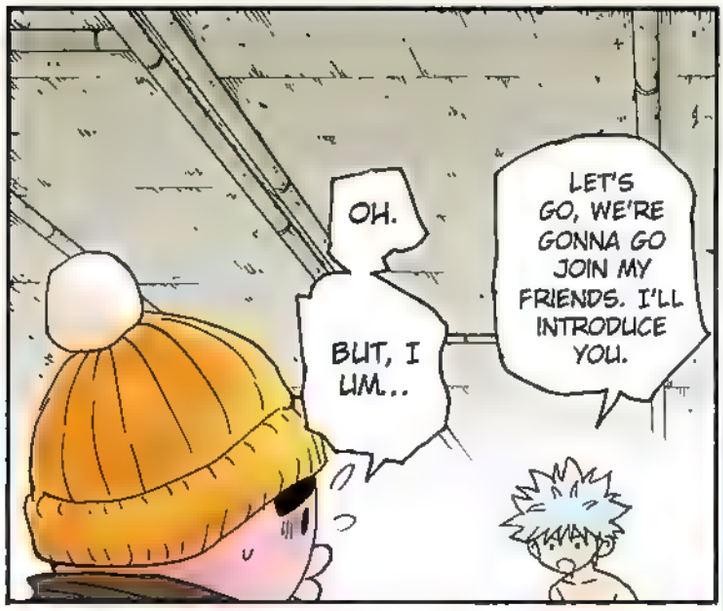

JUST SHUT UP AND GO AWAY ALREADY!
THAT'S 100 TIMES THE NORMAL EXCHANGE RATE!
IT COSTS 10,000 JENNY PER MINUTE. WE DON'T TAKE CURRENCY FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, BUT WE DO EXCHANGE 500,000 PAIL FOR 1 JENNY.

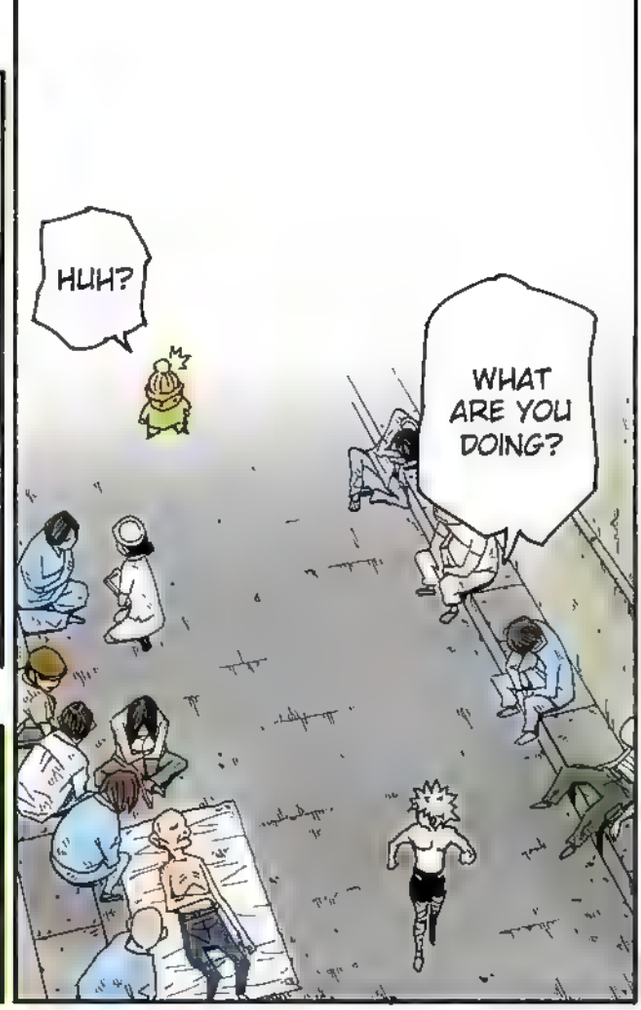

LET ME BORROW YOUR PHONE!
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT!!

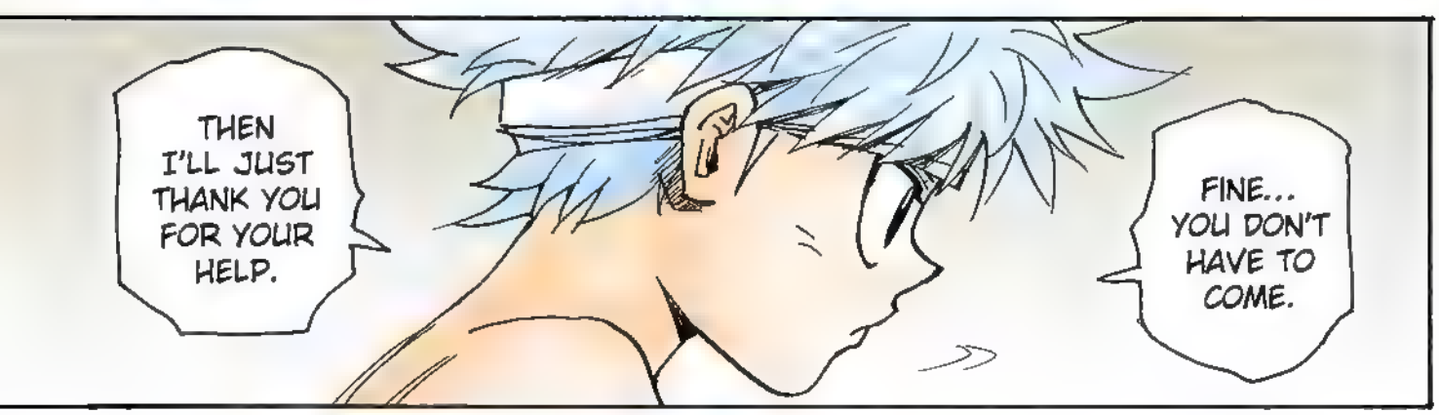

KILLUA ?!!
HEY, IT'S ME.

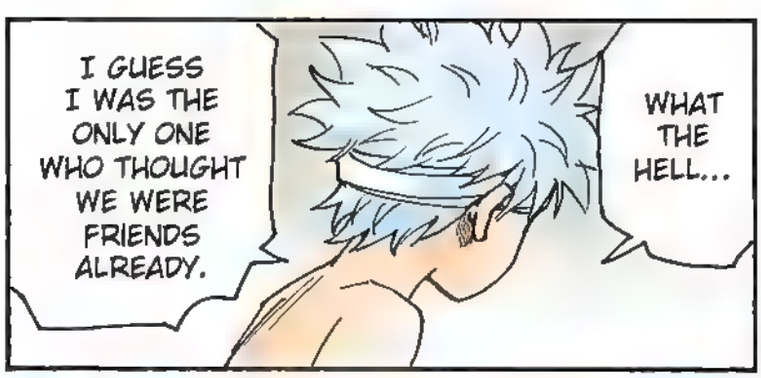
OH. WELL I'M GLAD YOU CALLED! THAT MEANS YOU'RE OKAY NOW, RIGHT?!
A STRONG ENEMY GAVE ME SOME TROUBLE. I'VE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL.
I'LL TELL YOU LATER WHEN I SEE YOU.
WHERE ARE YOU?! ARE YOU OKAY?! WHAT HAPPENED ?!
PAY UP!
YEAH, I'LL BE BACK SOON.
ANYTHING HAPPENED ON YOUR SIDE?
HAA HAA HAA HAA
THAT'S SO HALF-ASSED!
HE'S HITTING IT OFF WITH KNUCKLE.
WE'VE FOUND A NEW STRONG ALLY.
ONCE THAT'S DONE, WE CAN RENDEZVOUS TODAY.
OKAY, BUT I NEED YOU TO SEND SOME MONEY TO AN ACCOUNT.
BUT YOUR BODY...
I WANT TO MEET UP AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK.
WE HAVE A PLAN THAT COULD DEFEAT THE KING IF IT GOES WELL.
OH.

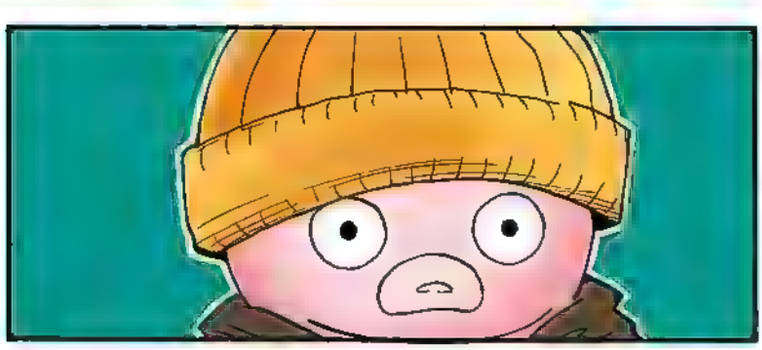
HOW ...?!
HIS WOUNDS... ARE ALREADY HEALED ...?!
AH ...
HM.
I'M GOOD TO GO.
OKAY!
UM ...
OK, YOUR PAYMENT'S BEEN CONFIRMED.
SO, YOU CAN LEAVE NOW.

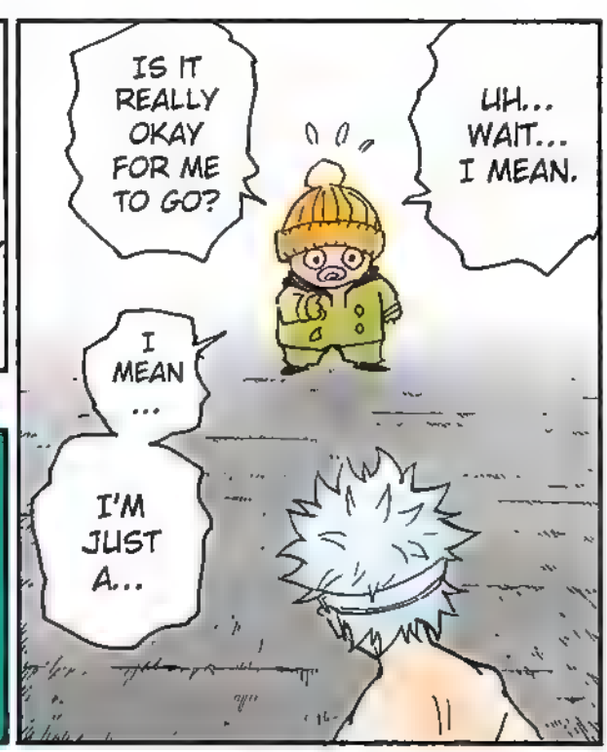

OH.
BUT, I UM...
LET'S GO, WE'RE GONNA GO JOIN MY FRIENDS. I'LL INTRODUCE YOU.


HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


THEN I'LL JUST THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.
FINE... YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME.

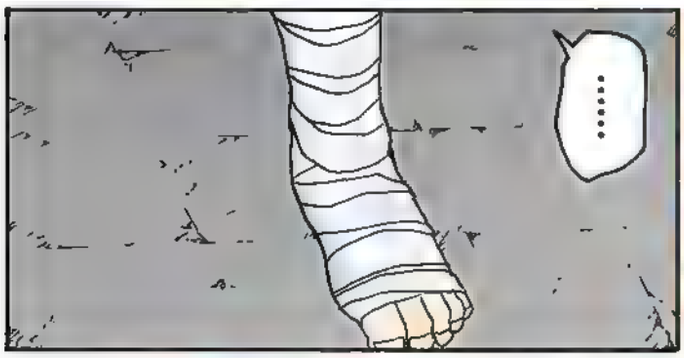

I GUESS I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS ALREADY.
WHAT THE HELL...

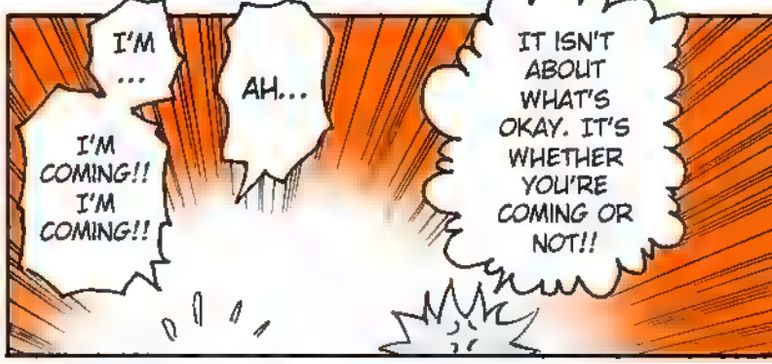


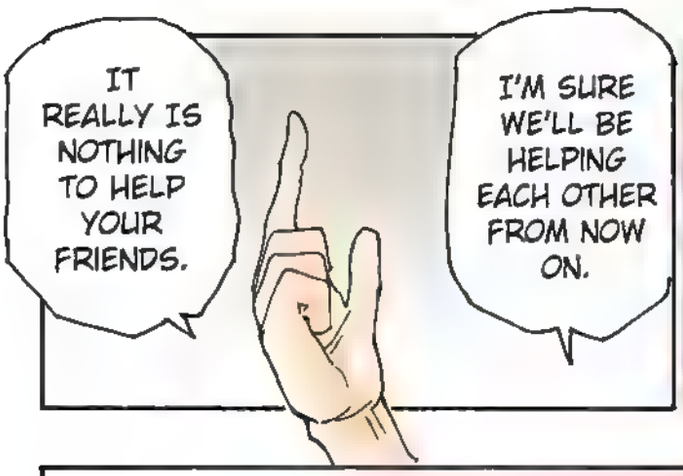

IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO GO?
UH... WAIT... I MEAN.
I MEAN ...
I'M JUST A...

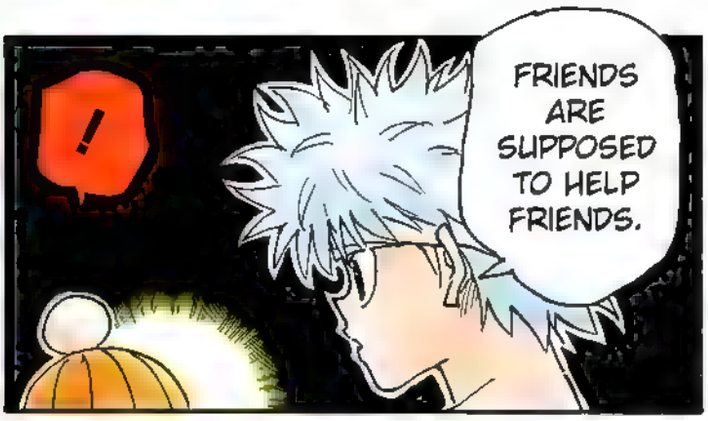
YOU SURE...

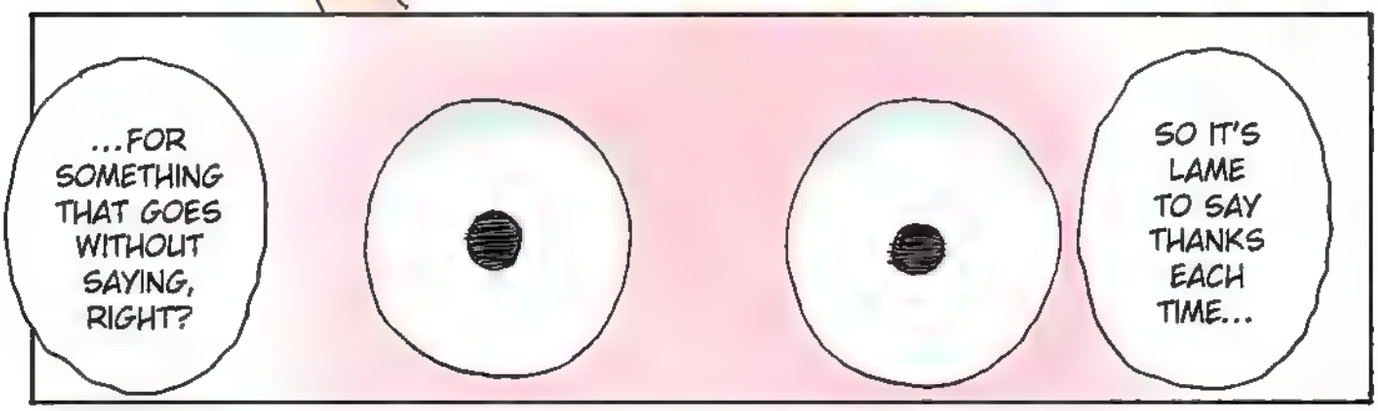
...IT'S OKAY?

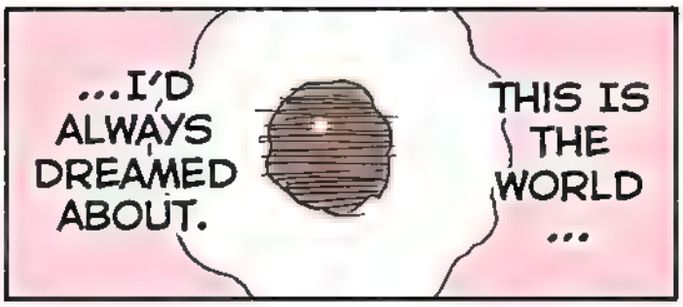


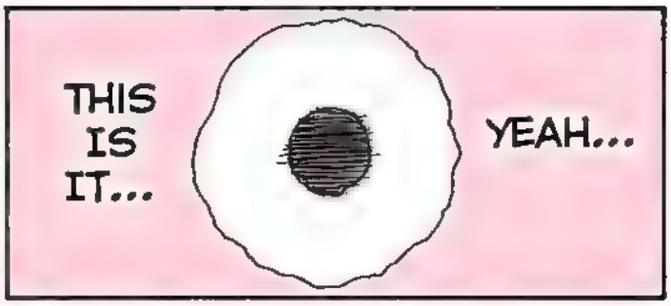


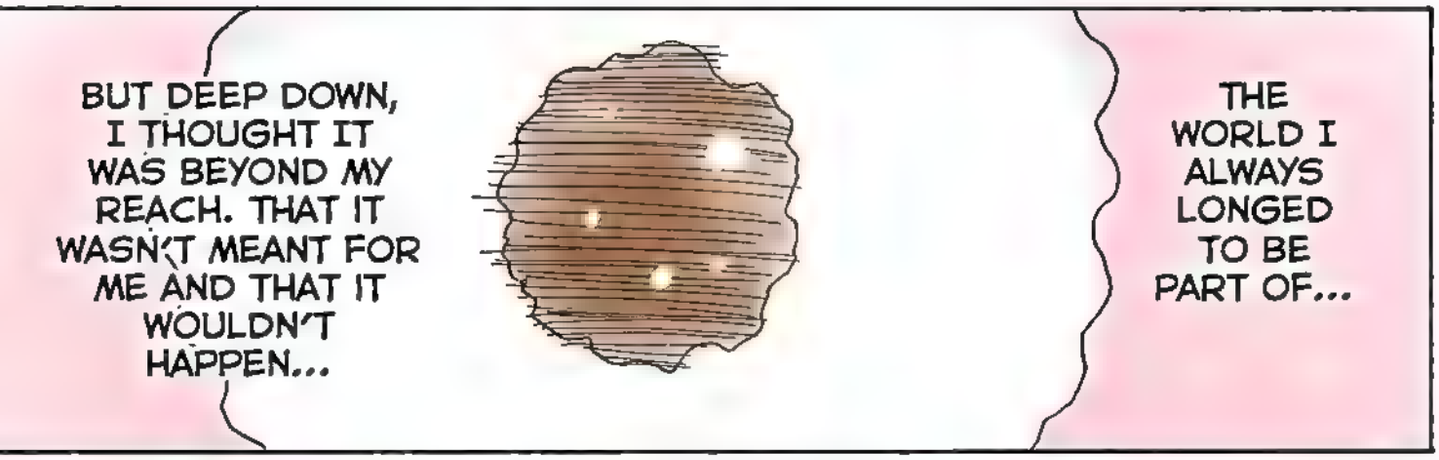

IT REALLY IS NOTHING TO HELP YOUR FRIENDS.
I'M SURE WE'LL BE HELPING EACH OTHER FROM NOW ON.

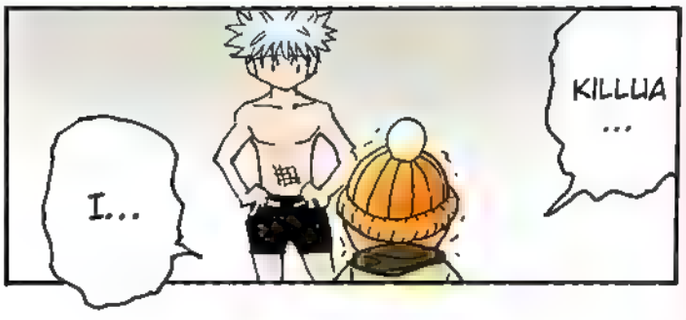

!
FRIENDS ARE SUPPOSED TO HELP FRIENDS.

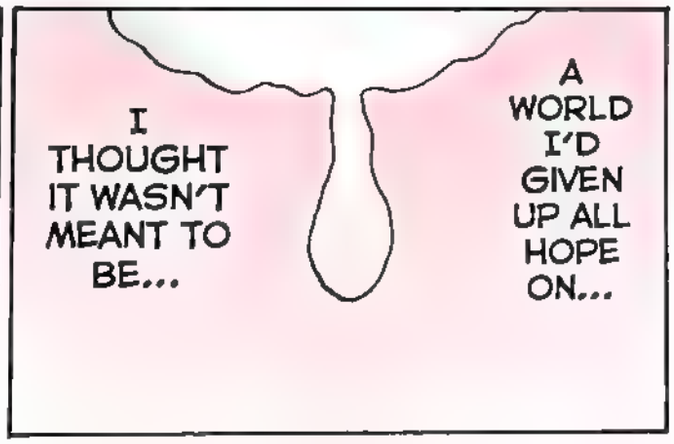

...FOR SOMETHING THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING, RIGHT?
SO IT'S LAME TO SAY THANKS EACH TIME...

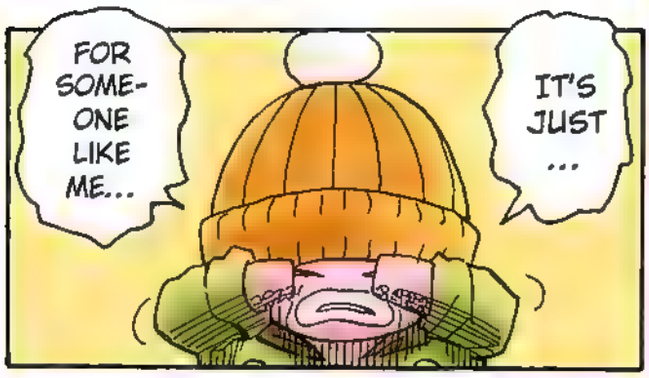

...I'D ALWAYS DREAMED ABOUT.
THIS IS THE WORLD ...


THIS IS IT...
YEAH...


BUT DEEP DOWN, I THOUGHT IT WAS BEYOND MY REACH. THAT IT WASN'T MEANT FOR ME AND THAT IT WOULDN'T HAPPEN...
THE WORLD I ALWAYS LONGED TO BE PART OF...

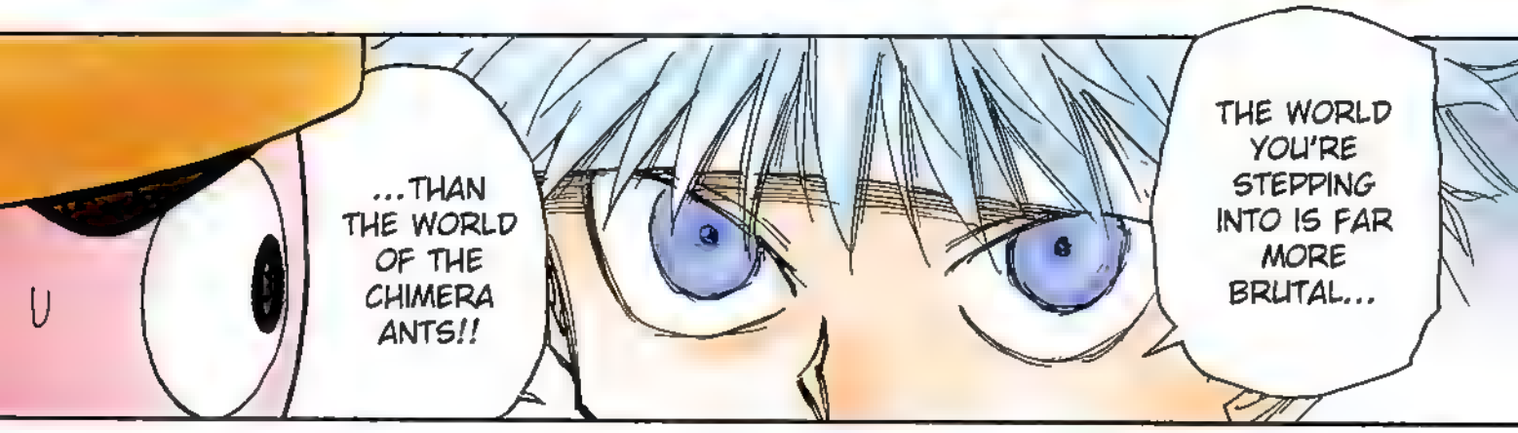

I...
KILLUA ...

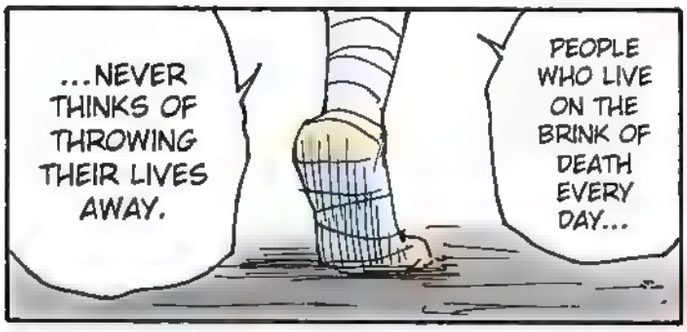

I THOUGHT IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE...
A WORLD I'D GIVEN UP ALL HOPE ON...

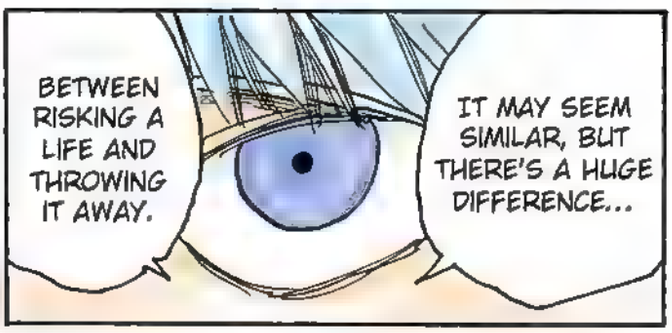

FOR SOME-ONE LIKE ME...
IT'S JUST ...

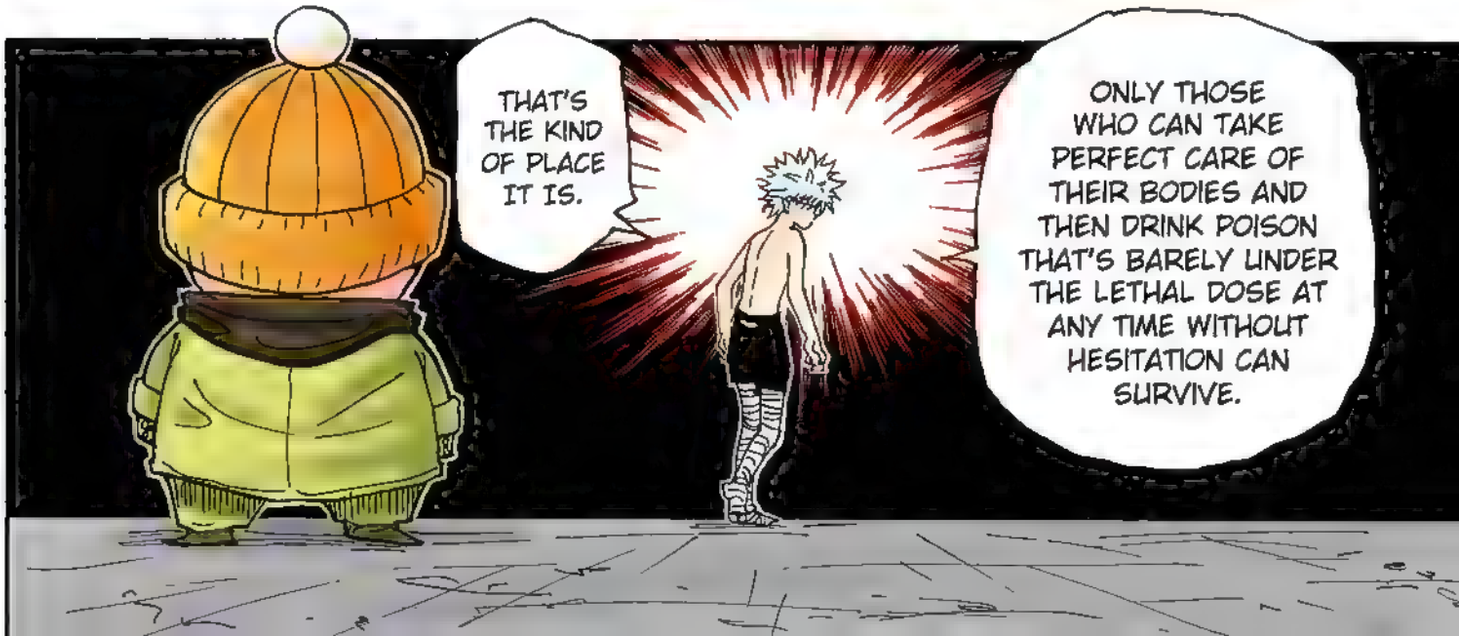
I WANT TO MAKE ONE MORE THING CLEAR.
COME ON...

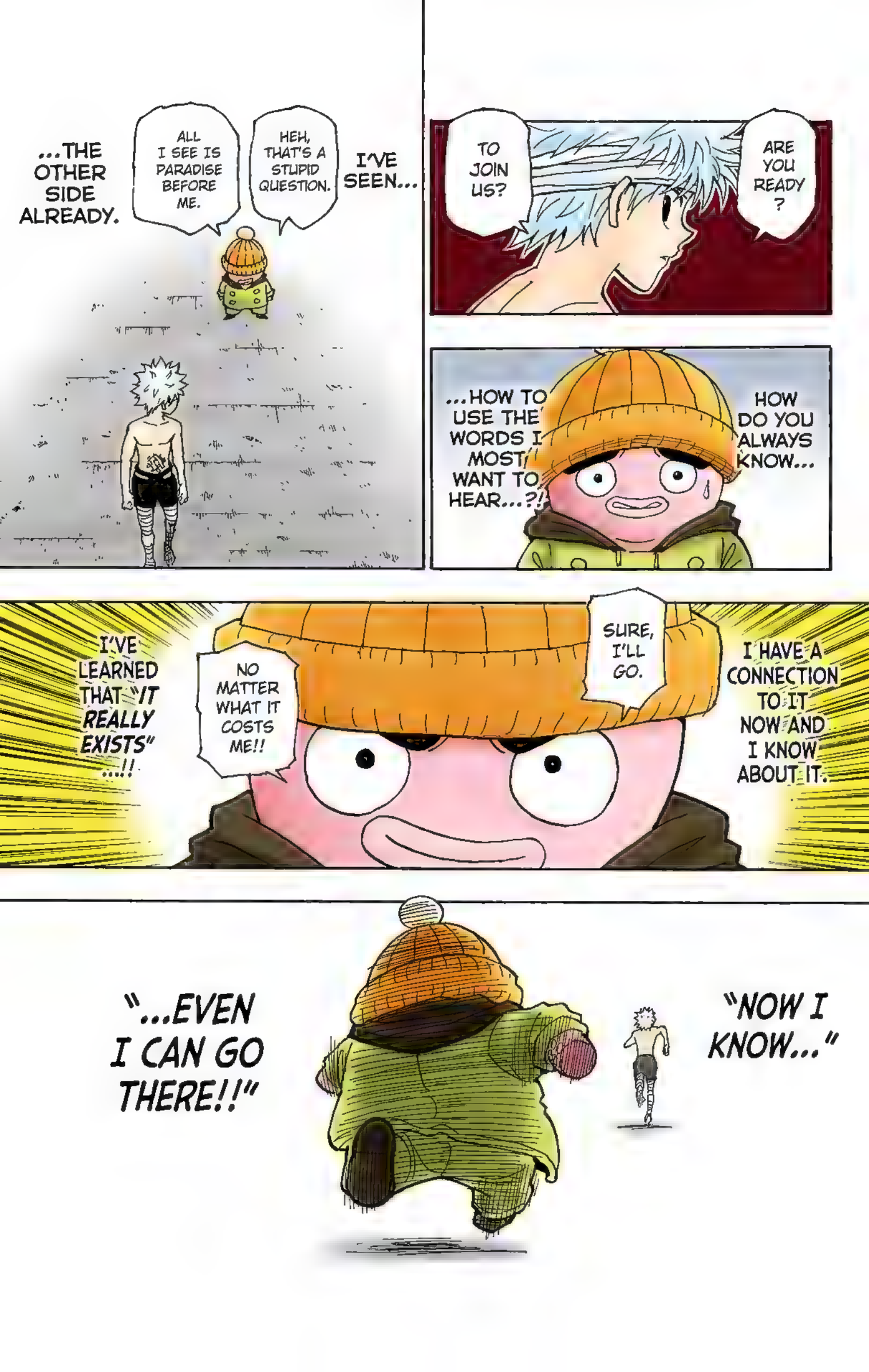
WHY ARE YOU CRYING ?!
HUH ?!
WAAAHH
I'M SO HAPPY... I COULD DIE RIGHT NOW!


...THAN THE WORLD OF THE CHIMERA ANTS!!
THE WORLD YOU'RE STEPPING INTO IS FAR MORE BRUTAL...

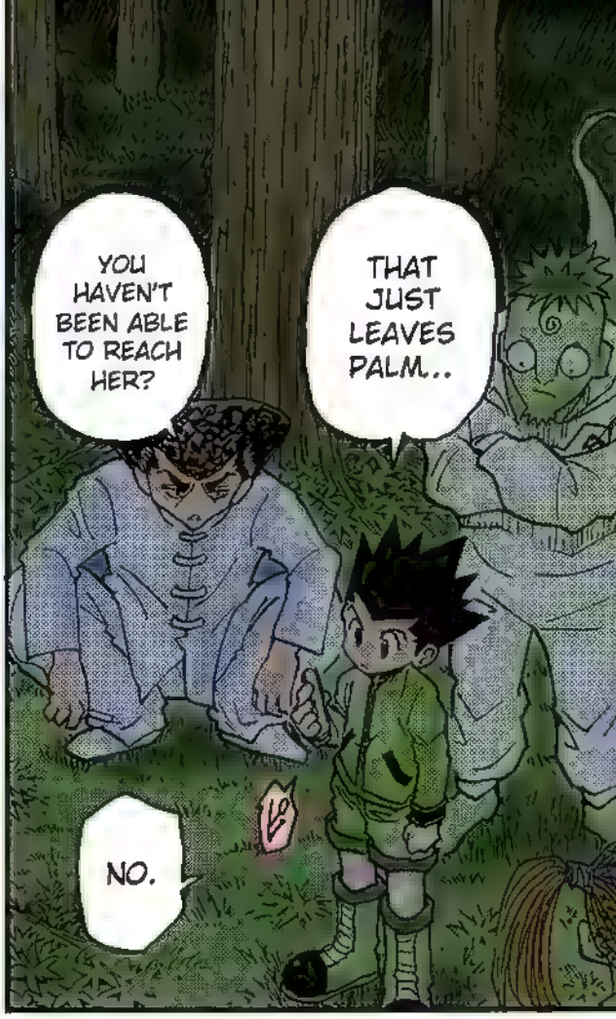

...NEVER THINKS OF THROWING THEIR LIVES AWAY.
PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH EVERY DAY...

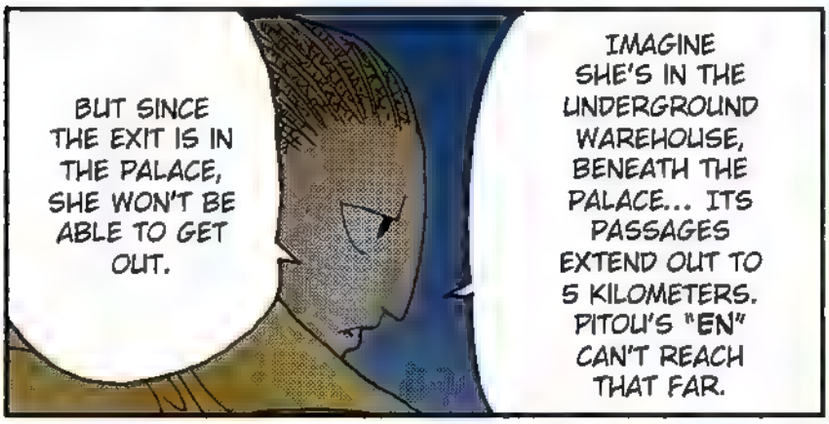

BETWEEN RISKING A LIFE AND THROWING IT AWAY.
IT MAY SEEM SIMILAR, BUT THERE'S A HUGE DIFFERENCE...


THAT'S THE KIND OF PLACE IT IS.
ONLY THOSE WHO CAN TAKE PERFECT CARE OF THEIR BODIES AND THEN DRINK POISON THAT'S BARELY UNDER THE LETHAL DOSE AT ANY TIME WITHOUT HESITATION CAN SURVIVE.

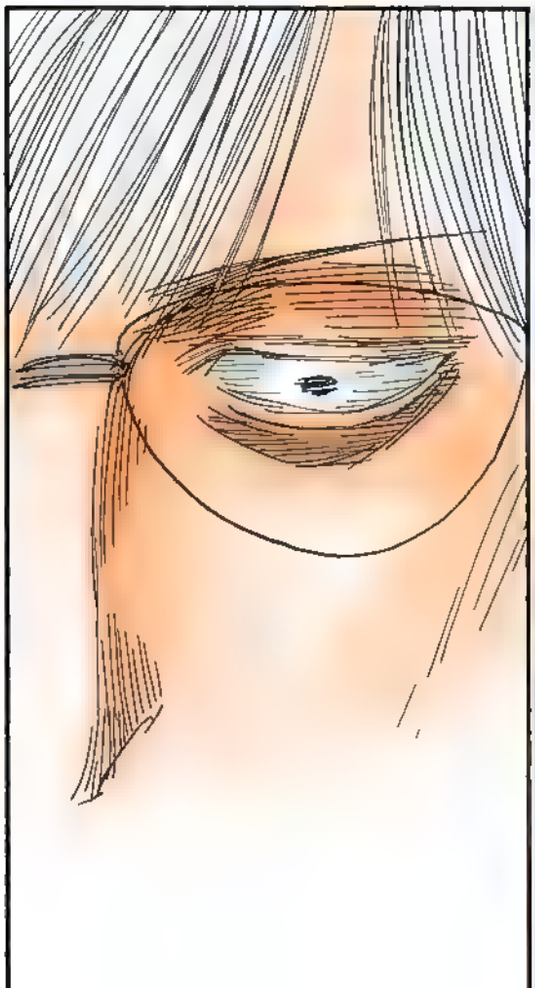

...THE OTHER SIDE ALREADY.
ALL I SEE IS PARADISE BEFORE ME.
HEH, THAT'S A STUPID QUESTION.
I'VE SEEN...
TO JOIN US?
ARE YOU READY ?
...HOW TO USE THE WORDS I MOST WANT TO HEAR...?!
HOW DO YOU ALWAYS KNOW...
I'VE LEARNED THAT "IT REALLY EXISTS" ...!!
NO MATTER WHAT IT COSTS ME!!
SURE, I'LL GO.
I HAVE A CONNECTION TO IT NOW AND I KNOW ABOUT IT.
"...EVEN I CAN GO THERE!!"
"NOW I KNOW..."

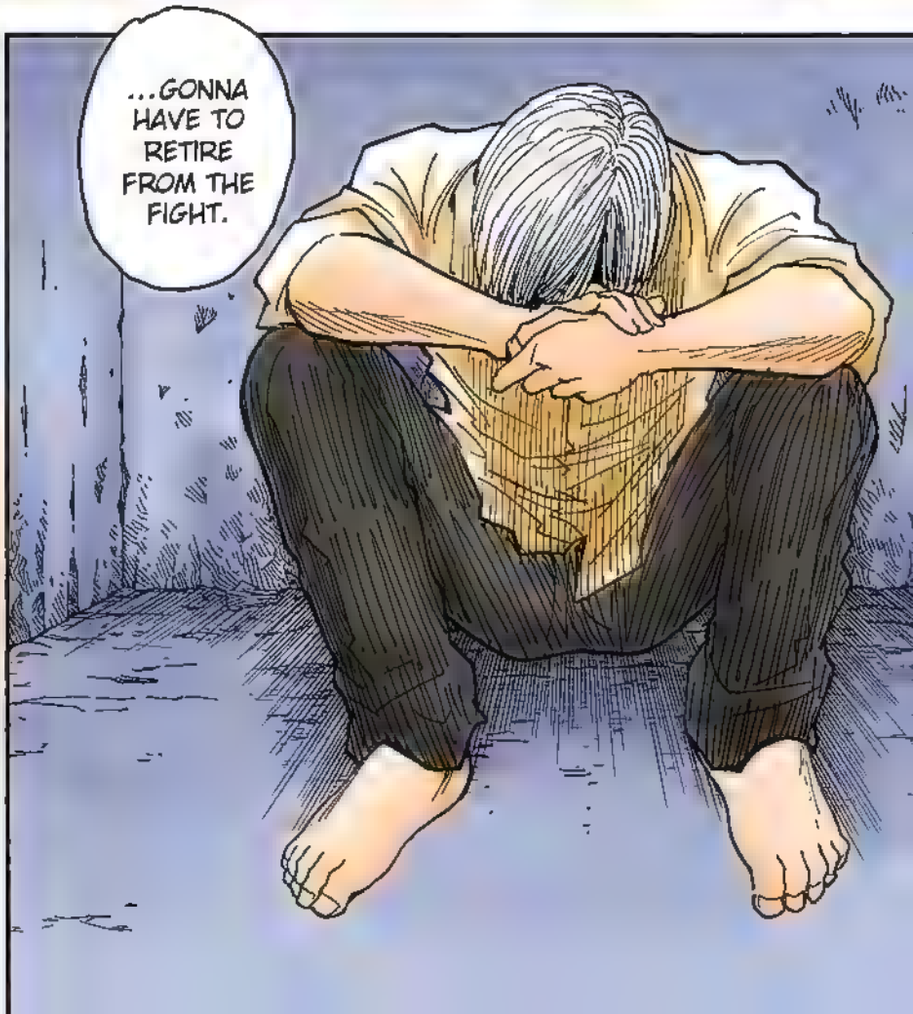
WOULDN'T PITOU'S "EN" HAVE DETECTED HER ALREADY?
BUT...
SHE'S PROBABLY STILL IN THE PALACE...

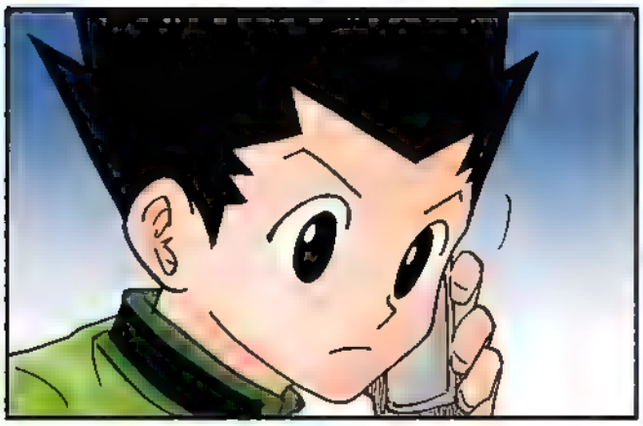

YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REACH HER?
THAT JUST LEAVES PALM...
NO.

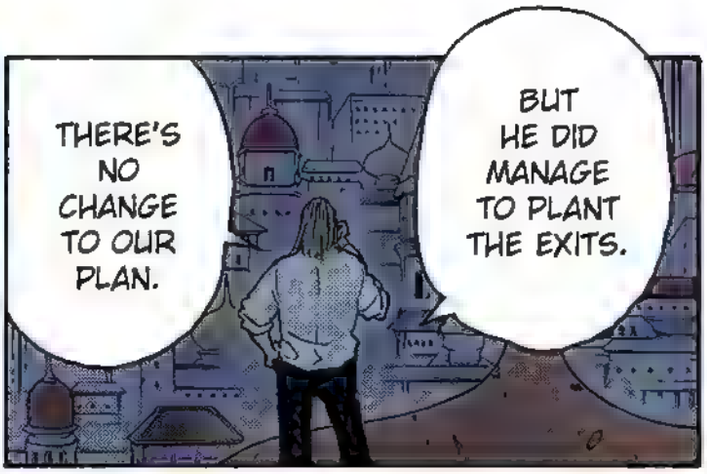

BUT SINCE THE EXIT IS IN THE PALACE, SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET OUT.
IMAGINE SHE'S IN THE UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE, BENEATH THE PALACE... ITS PASSAGES EXTEND OUT TO 5 KILOMETERS. PITOU'S "EN" CAN'T REACH THAT FAR.

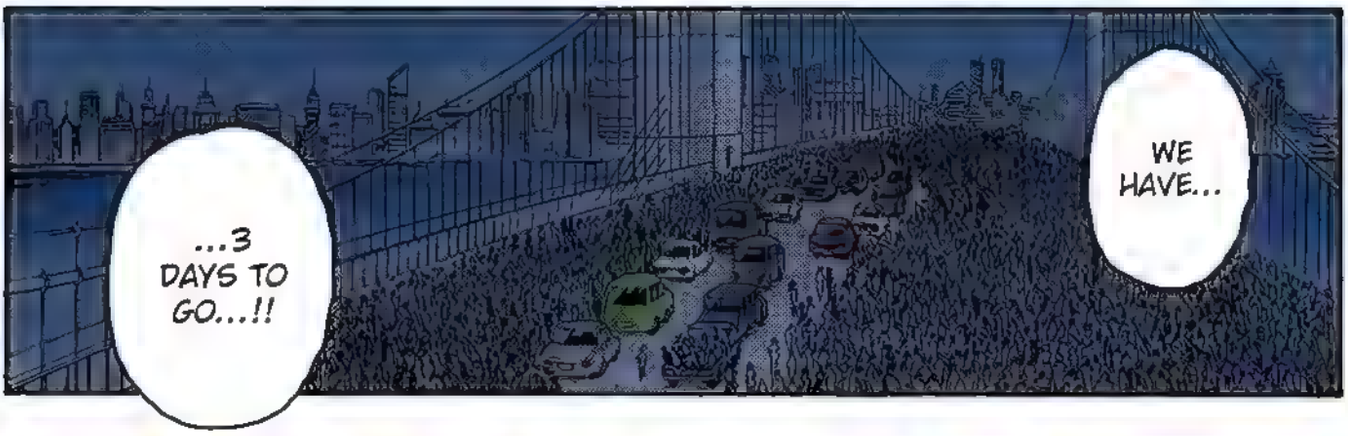
HOW'S MR.KNOV DOING...?
...
HE'S...

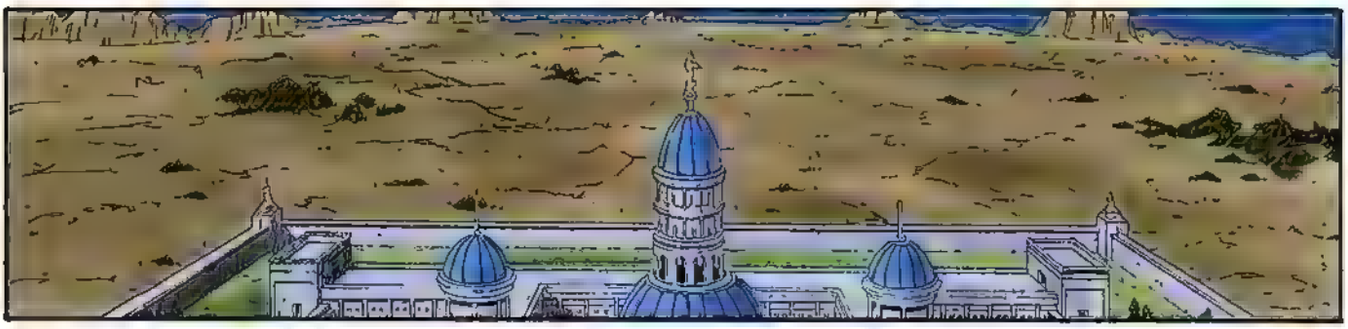


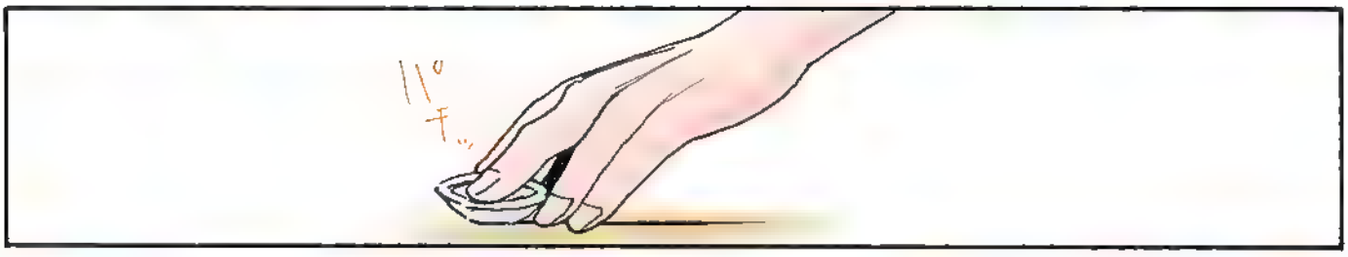

...GONNA HAVE TO RETIRE FROM THE FIGHT.

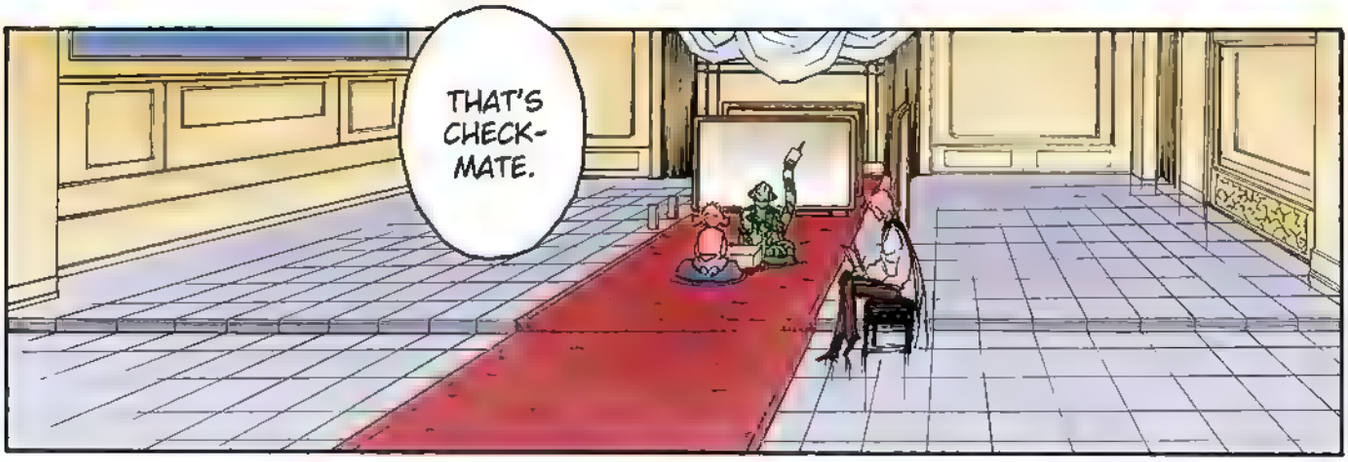


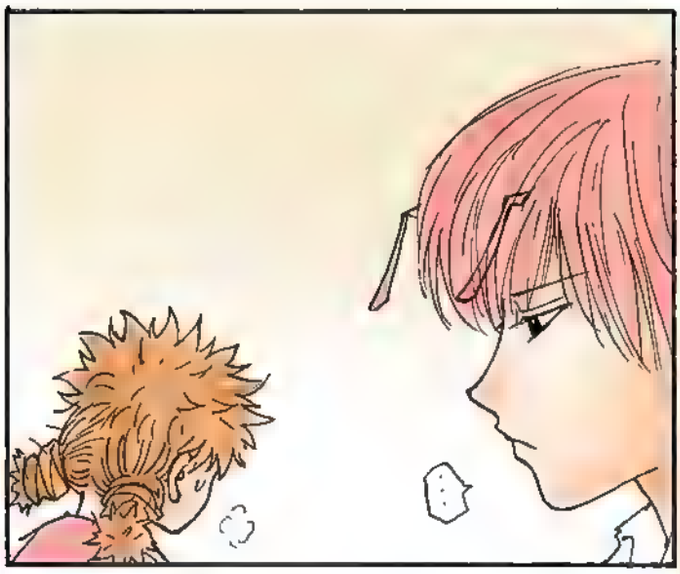

THERE'S NO CHANGE TO OUR PLAN.
BUT HE DID MANAGE TO PLANT THE EXITS.

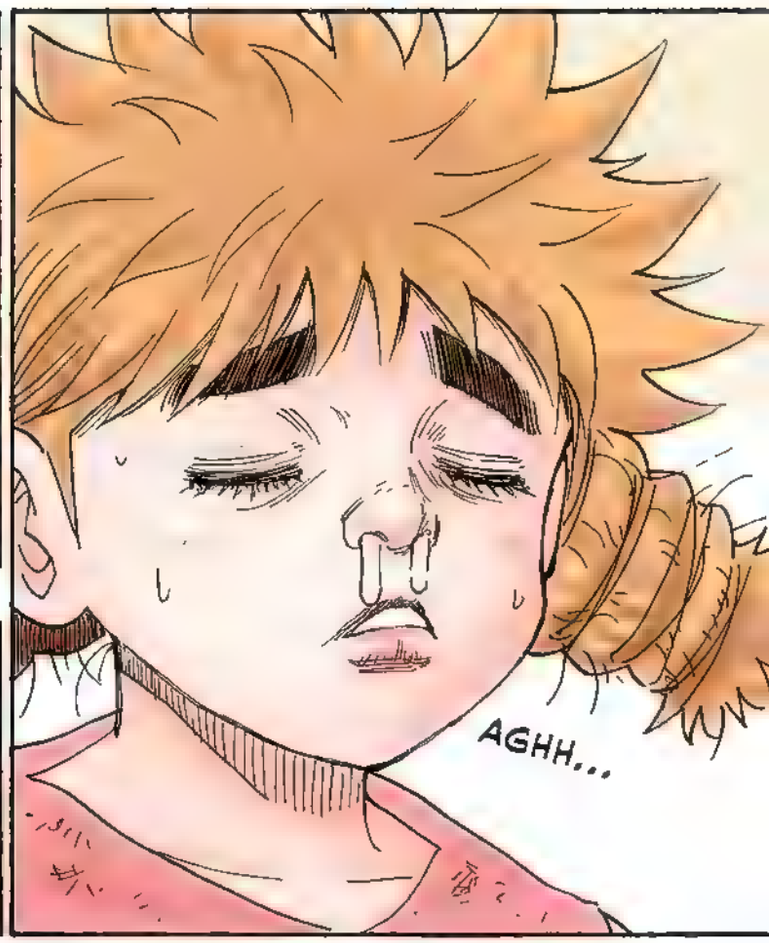

...3 DAYS TO GO...!!
WE HAVE...

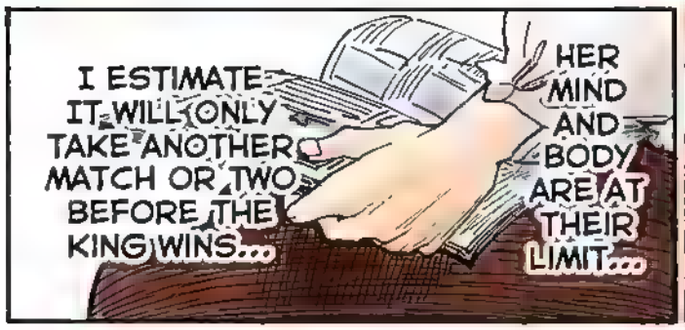


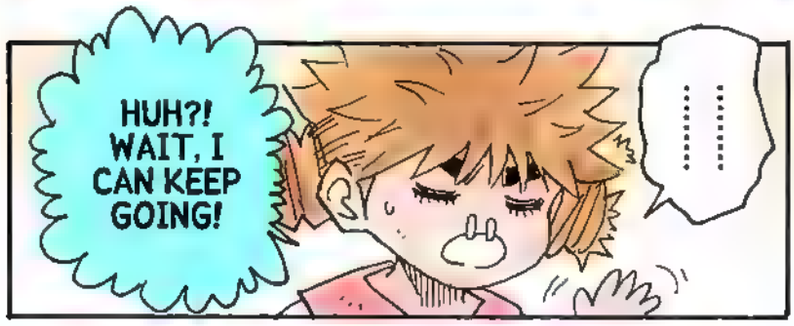


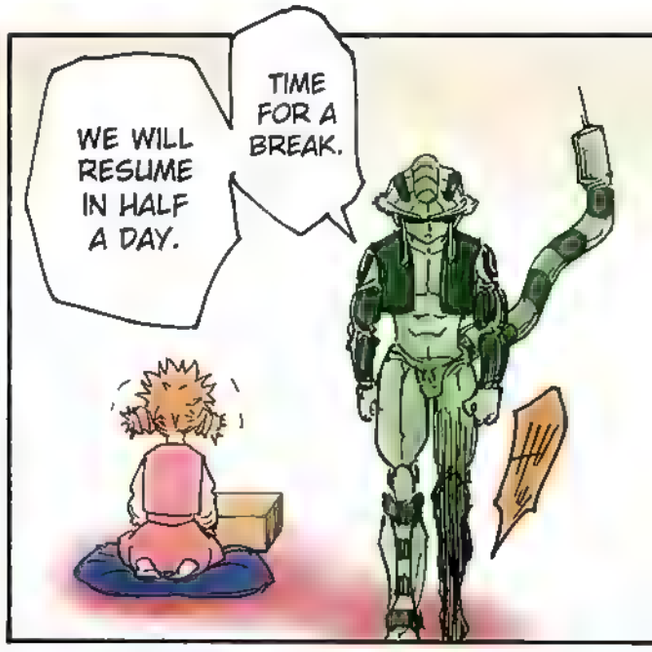

THAT'S CHECK-MATE.

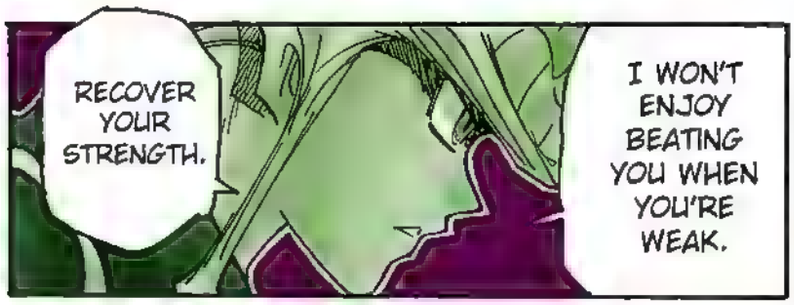



AGHH...

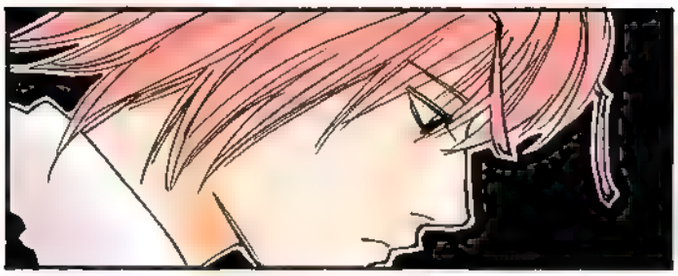

I ESTIMATE IT WILL ONLY TAKE ANOTHER MATCH OR TWO BEFORE THE KING WINS...
HER MIND AND BODY ARE AT THEIR LIMIT...


HUH?! WAIT, I CAN KEEP GOING!
.....


WE WILL RESUME IN HALF A DAY.
TIME FOR A BREAK.

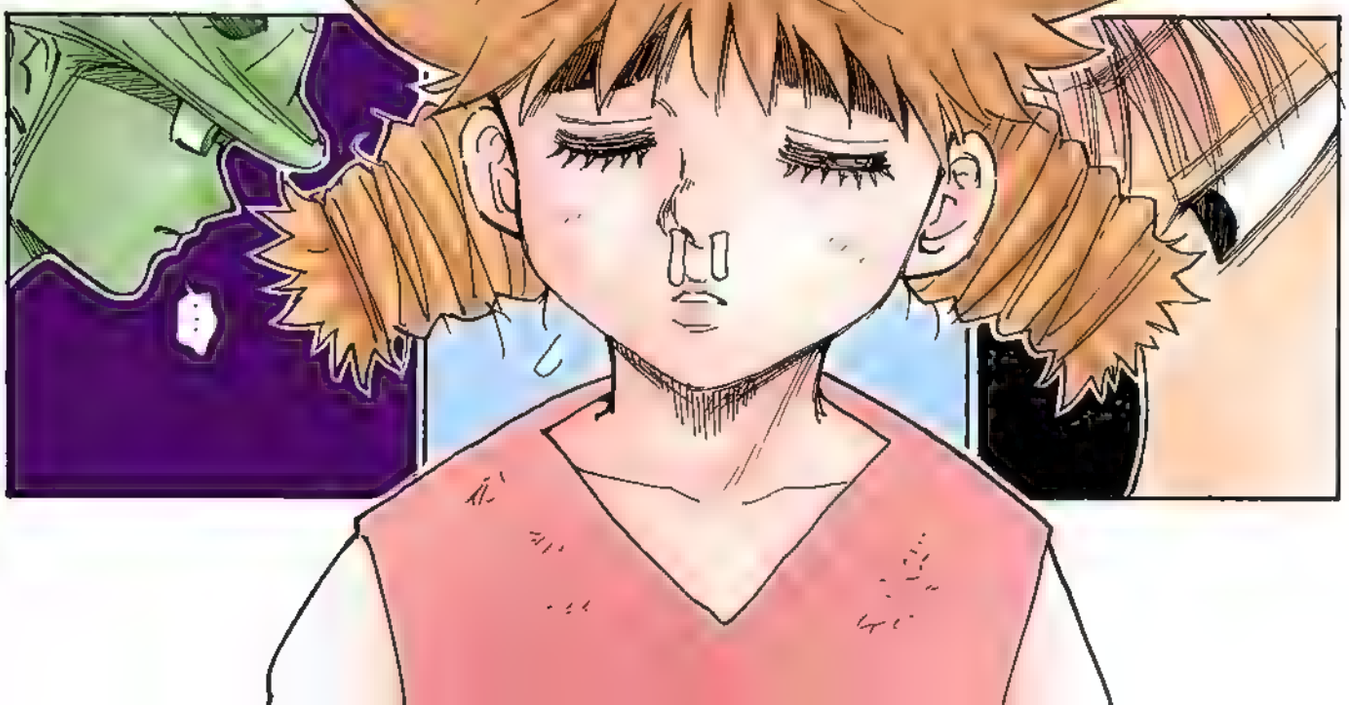

RECOVER YOUR STRENGTH.
I WON'T ENJOY BEATING YOU WHEN YOU'RE WEAK.

BUT NOW HE HAS CHANGED HIS MIND...?!
THE KING NEVER WANTS TO STOP PLAYING...

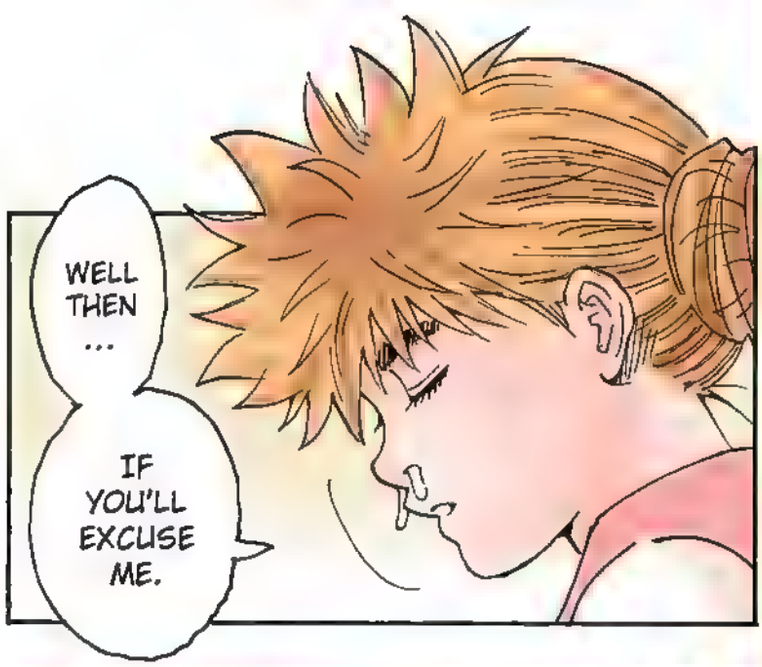


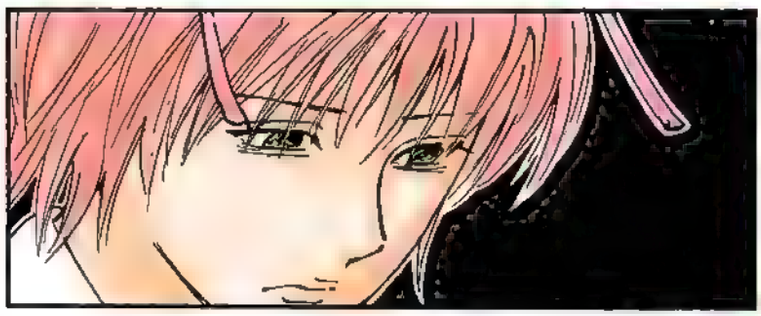
THIS GIRL...

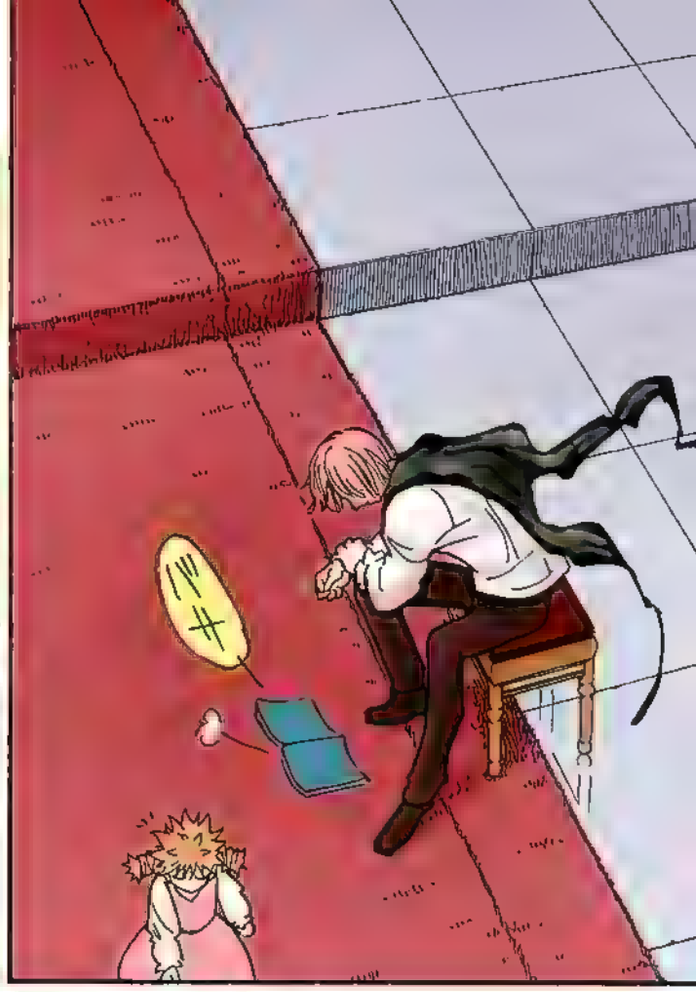
IS A LIABILITY ...!

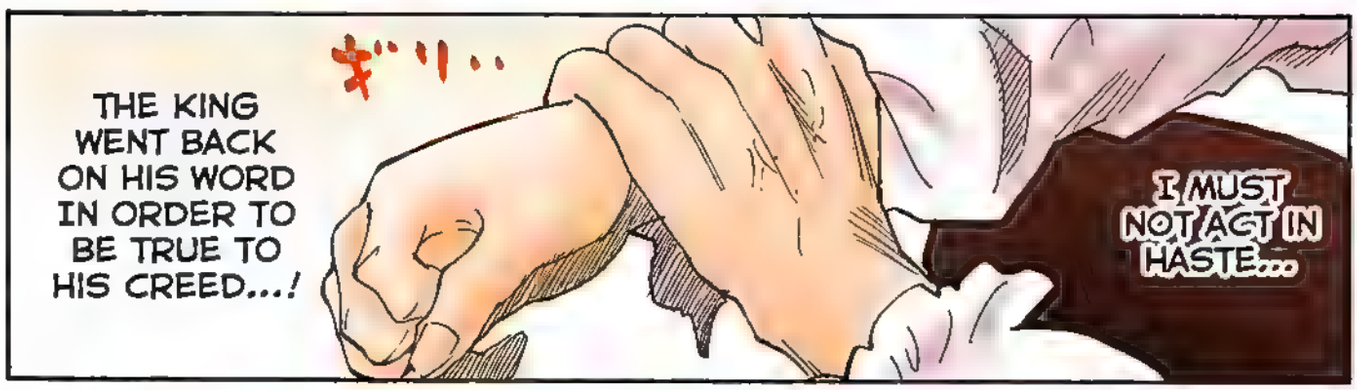


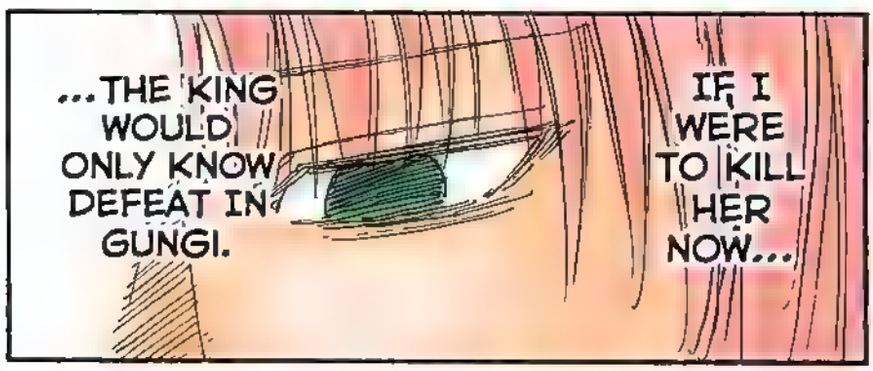
No.256 ◆ 2: PART ②


WELL THEN ...
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

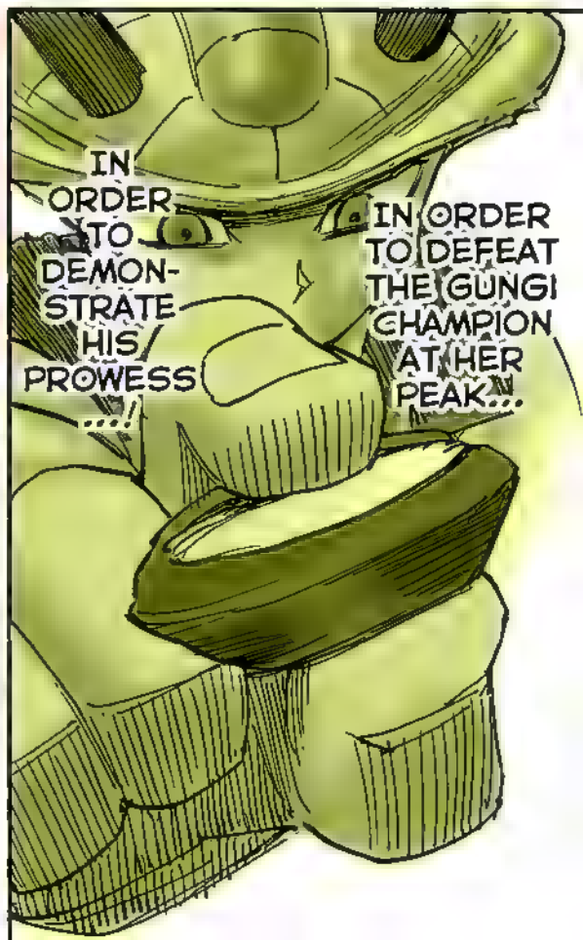





THE KING WENT BACK ON HIS WORD IN ORDER TO BE TRUE TO HIS CREED...!
I MUST NOT ACT IN HASTE...


...THE KING WOULD ONLY KNOW DEFEAT IN GUNGI.
IF I WERE TO KILL HER NOW...

...AS SOMEONE THE KING COULD NEVER DEFEAT...!!
HER DEATH WOULD ONLY CEMENT HER STATUS...


IN ORDER TO DEMON-STRATE HIS PROWESS ...!
IN ORDER TO DEFEAT THE GUNGI CHAMPION AT HER PEAK...

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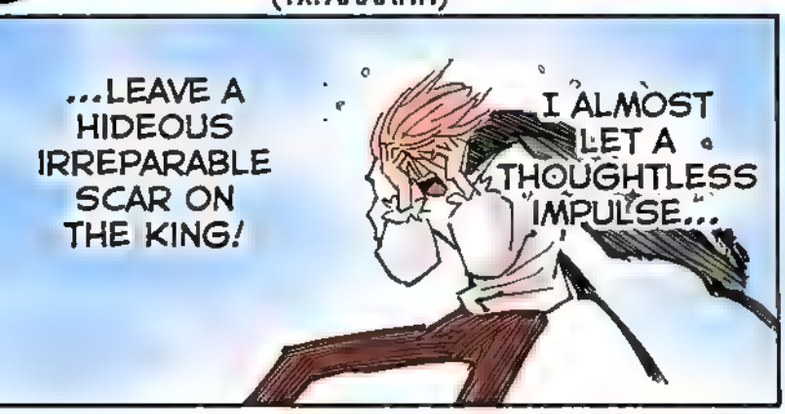
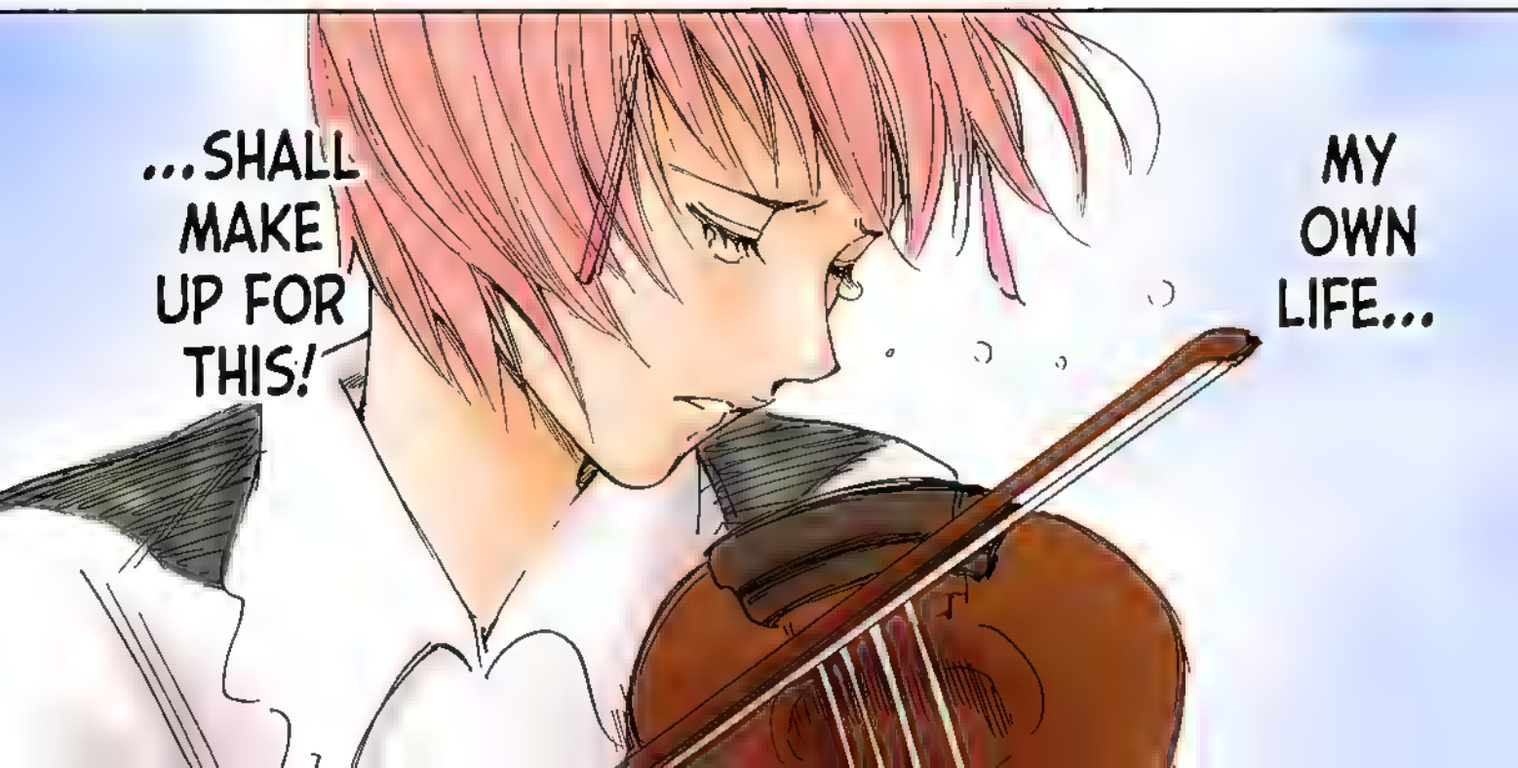
(Tx: AAAAHH)

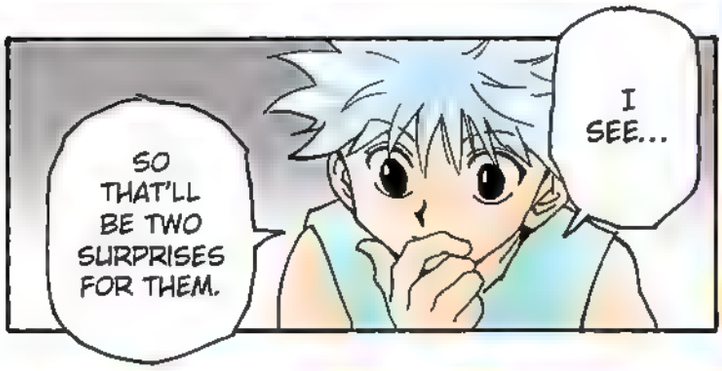


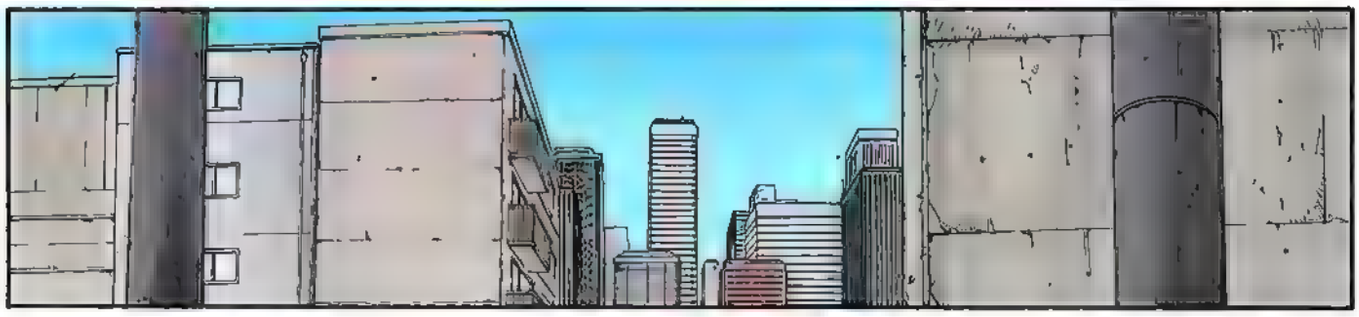


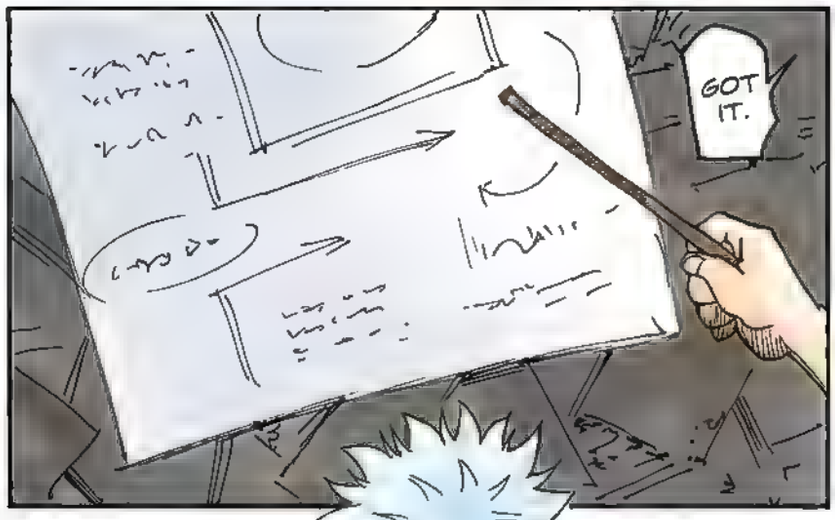
...THAT THE KING REIGNS OVER THE WORLD...!
AFTER I SEE TO IT...
AAAAAHHH!
?

USING MR.KNOV'S NEN "MANSION," SEVEN PEOPLE WILL INFILTRATE THE PALACE!!
SHOOT AND ME, GON, KILLUA, MELEORON, IKALGO, AND THEN MOREL.
THEY'LL BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD, SO THEIR IMMEDIATE REACTION WILL BE...
WHEN WE SUDDENLY APPEAR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PALACE...
...TO PROTECT THE KING WITH THEIR OWN LIVES...!!
DURING THAT TIME, WE MUST LURE THE ROYAL GUARD AWAY FROM THE KING.
A FEW SECONDS AFTER US, THE CHAIRMAN WILL ENTER FROM OUTSIDE PITOU'S "EN."
GON, KILLUA AND IKALGO WILL BE IN FRONT.
ドキ ドキ
THEY'LL LIKELY USE A FORMATION LIKE THIS.

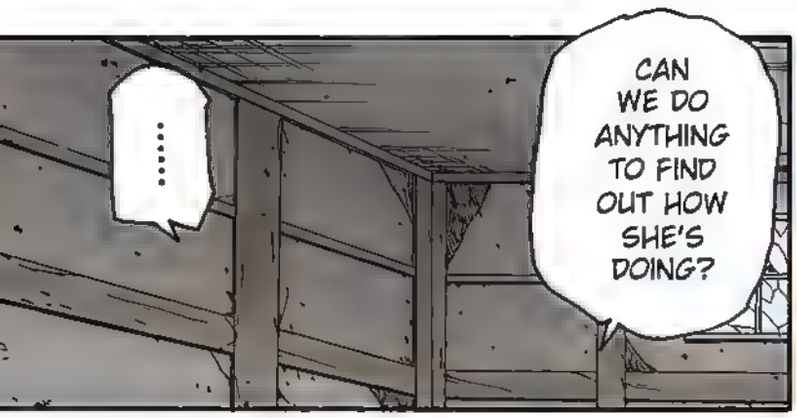
AND THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.
RIGHT.
BREAKING IT WON'T BE EASY...

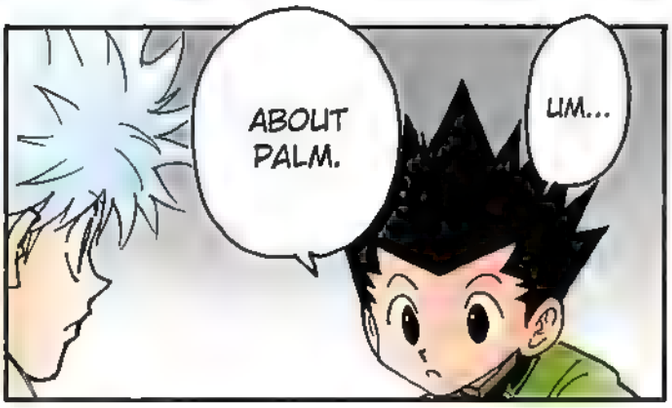

SO THAT'LL BE TWO SURPRISES FOR THEM.
I SEE...

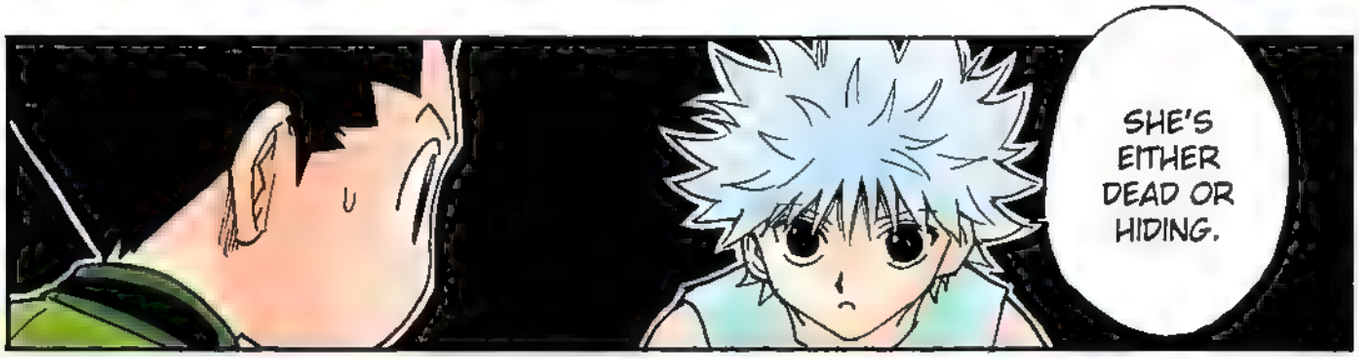


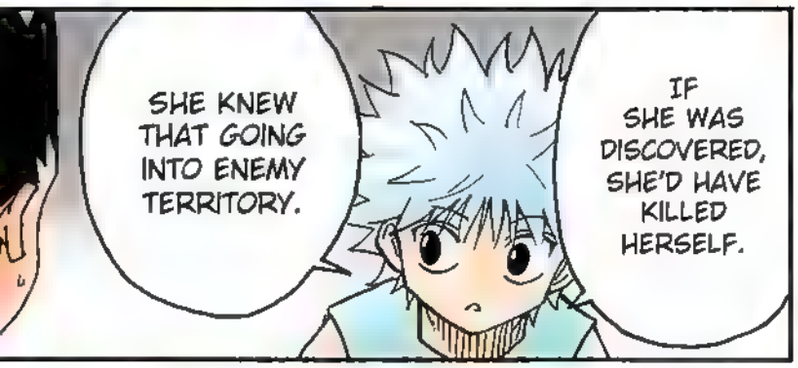

GOT IT.

ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?
OKAY ...

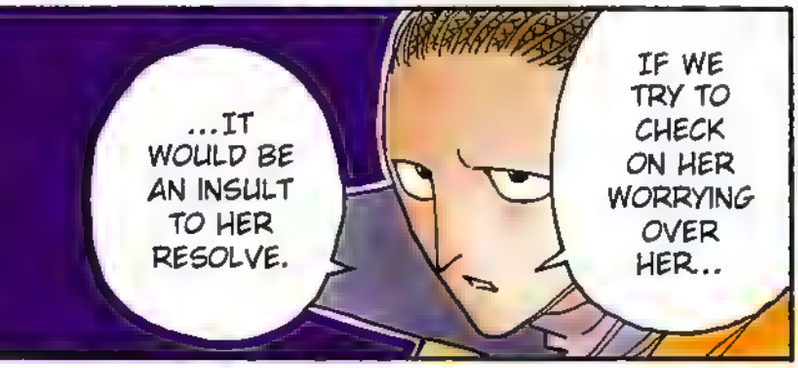

.....
CAN WE DO ANYTHING TO FIND OUT HOW SHE'S DOING?


ABOUT PALM.
UM...

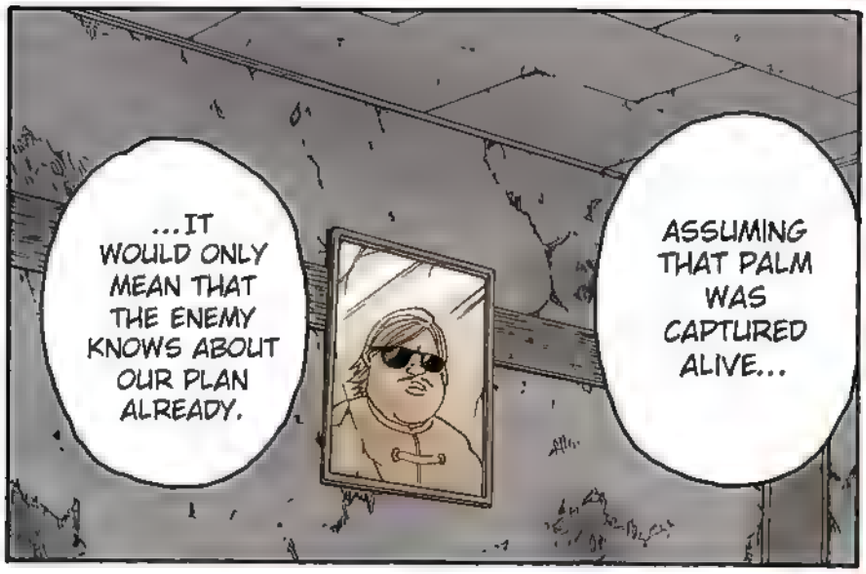

SHE'S EITHER DEAD OR HIDING.


SHE KNEW THAT GOING INTO ENEMY TERRITORY.
IF SHE WAS DISCOVERED, SHE'D HAVE KILLED HERSELF.

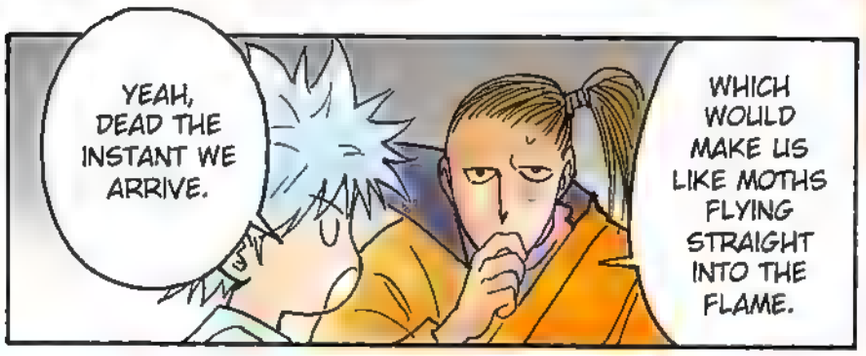
SINCE SHE HASN'T, THAT'S THE ONLY EXPLA-NATION.
IF SHE GOT AWAY, SHE WOULD'VE CALLED US.

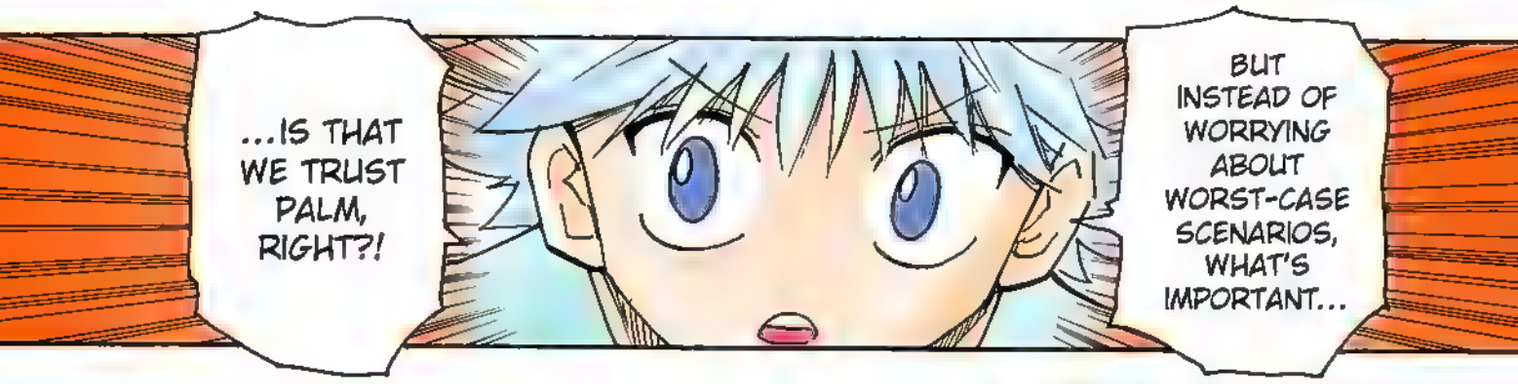

...IT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO HER RESOLVE.
IF WE TRY TO CHECK ON HER WORRYING OVER HER..

GON'S JUST CONCERNED ABOUT PALM..
HEY, YOU'RE BEING TOO HARSH!!
.....

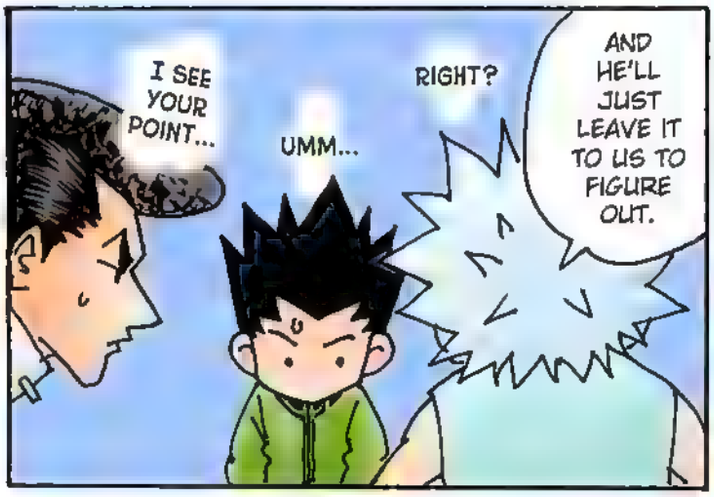

...IT WOULD ONLY MEAN THAT THE ENEMY KNOWS ABOUT OUR PLAN ALREADY.
ASSUMING THAT PALM WAS CAPTURED ALIVE...

AND THAT'S A ROOKIE'S WORRY.
WHAT YOU SAY ?!
YOU JUST CAME BACK! WHERE DO YOU GET OFF..
SIGH...

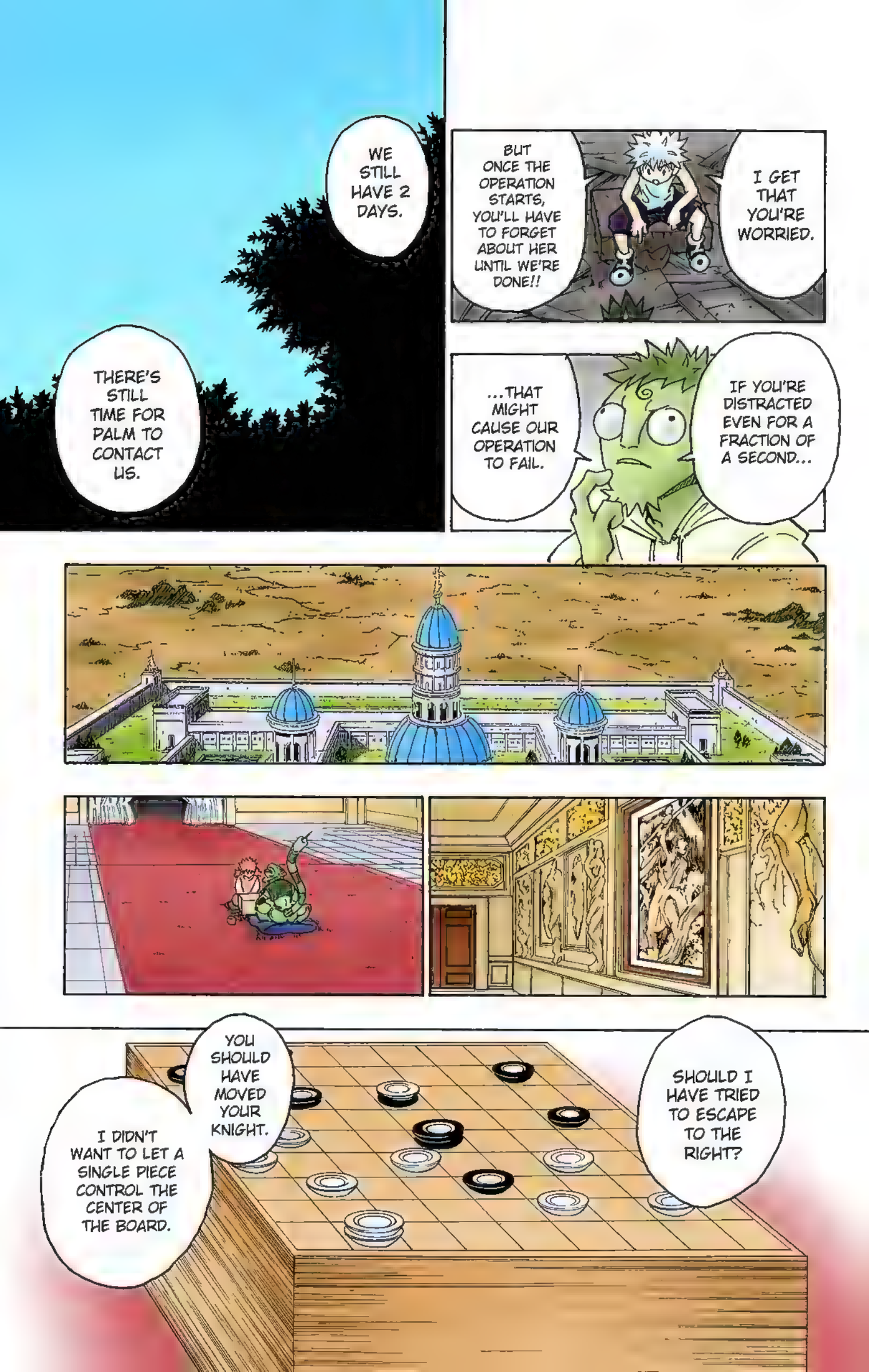

YEAH, DEAD THE INSTANT WE ARRIVE.
WHICH WOULD MAKE US LIKE MOTHS FLYING STRAIGHT INTO THE FLAME.

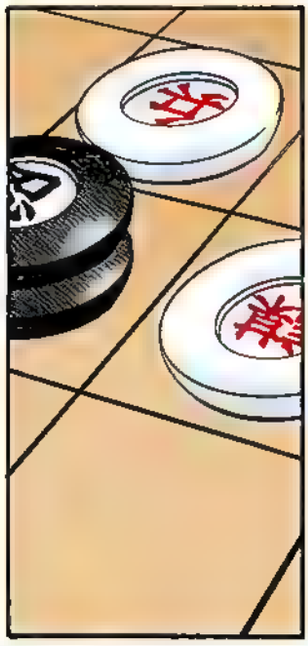

...IS THAT WE TRUST PALM, RIGHT?!
BUT INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT WORST-CASE SCENARIOS, WHAT'S IMPORTANT...

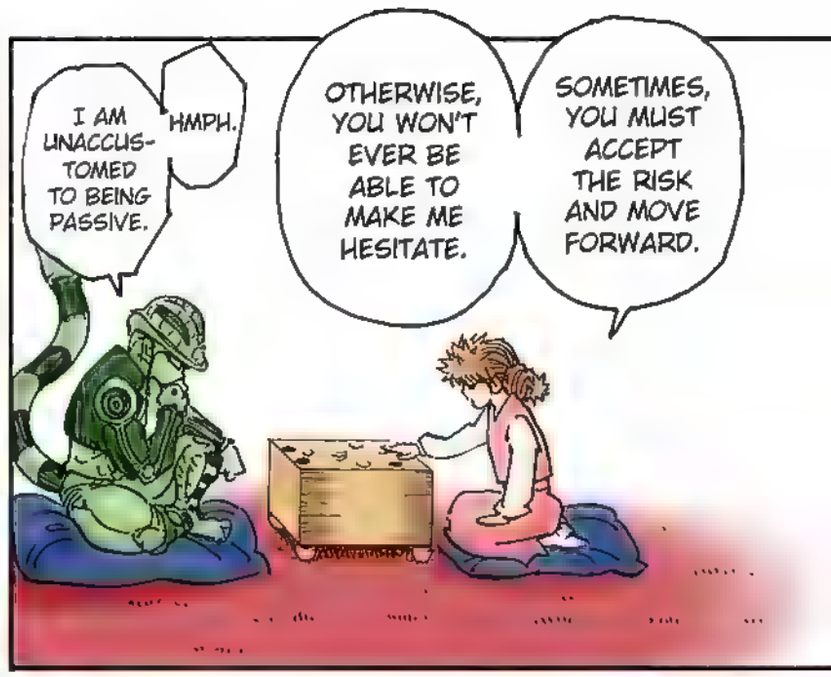
YOU'RE TOO SOFT. HE'LL SAY THAT WE HAVE TO SAVE PALM FIRST. BUT HE WON'T OFFER ANY PLANS FOR THAT.
NO WAY!


I SEE YOUR POINT...
UMM...
RIGHT?
AND HE'LL JUST LEAVE IT TO US TO FIGURE OUT.

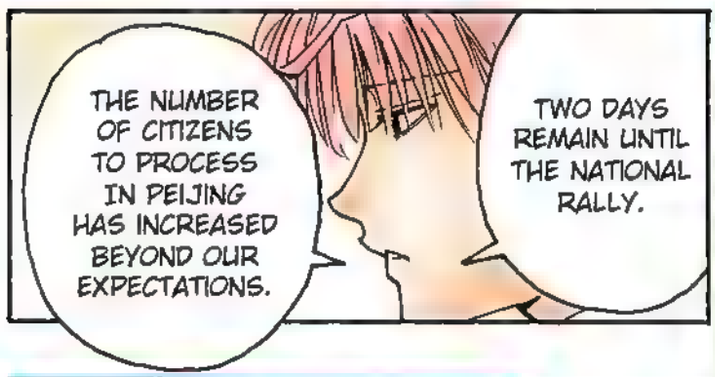
BUT GON'S POINT MIGHT BE THAT, IF PALM HAS MET SUCH A FATE...
WELL, THAT CERTAINLY MAKES SENSE.
WE STILL HAVE TIME TO CHANGE THE PLAN.


WE STILL HAVE 2 DAYS.
THERE'S STILL TIME FOR PALM TO CONTACT US.
BUT ONCE THE OPERATION STARTS, YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT HER UNTIL WE'RE DONE!!
I GET THAT YOU'RE WORRIED.
...THAT MIGHT CAUSE OUR OPERATION TO FAIL.
IF YOU'RE DISTRACTED EVEN FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND...
YOU SHOULD HAVE MOVED YOUR KNIGHT.
I DIDN'T WANT TO LET A SINGLE PIECE CONTROL THE CENTER OF THE BOARD.
SHOULD I HAVE TRIED TO ESCAPE TO THE RIGHT?

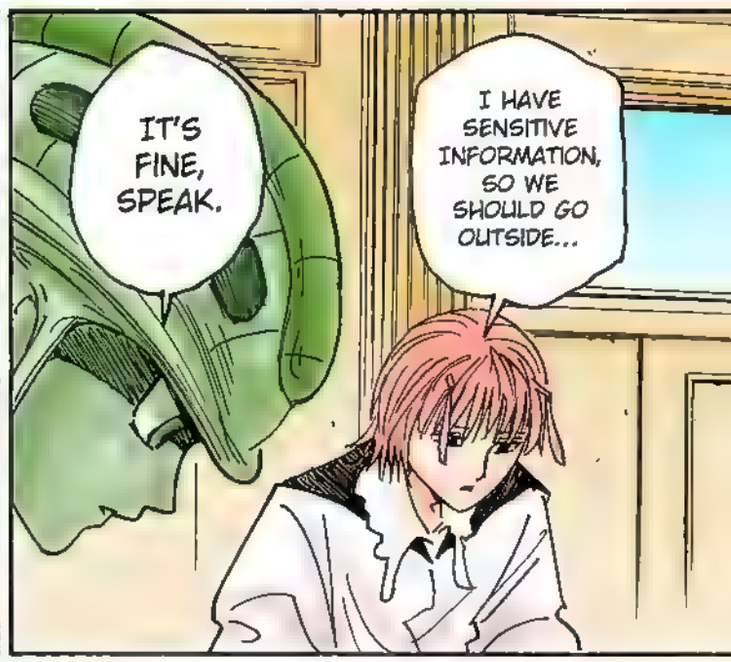



I AM UNACCUSTOMED TO BEING PASSIVE.
HMPH.
OTHERWISE, YOU WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO MAKE ME HESITATE.
SOMETIMES, YOU MUST ACCEPT THE RISK AND MOVE FORWARD.

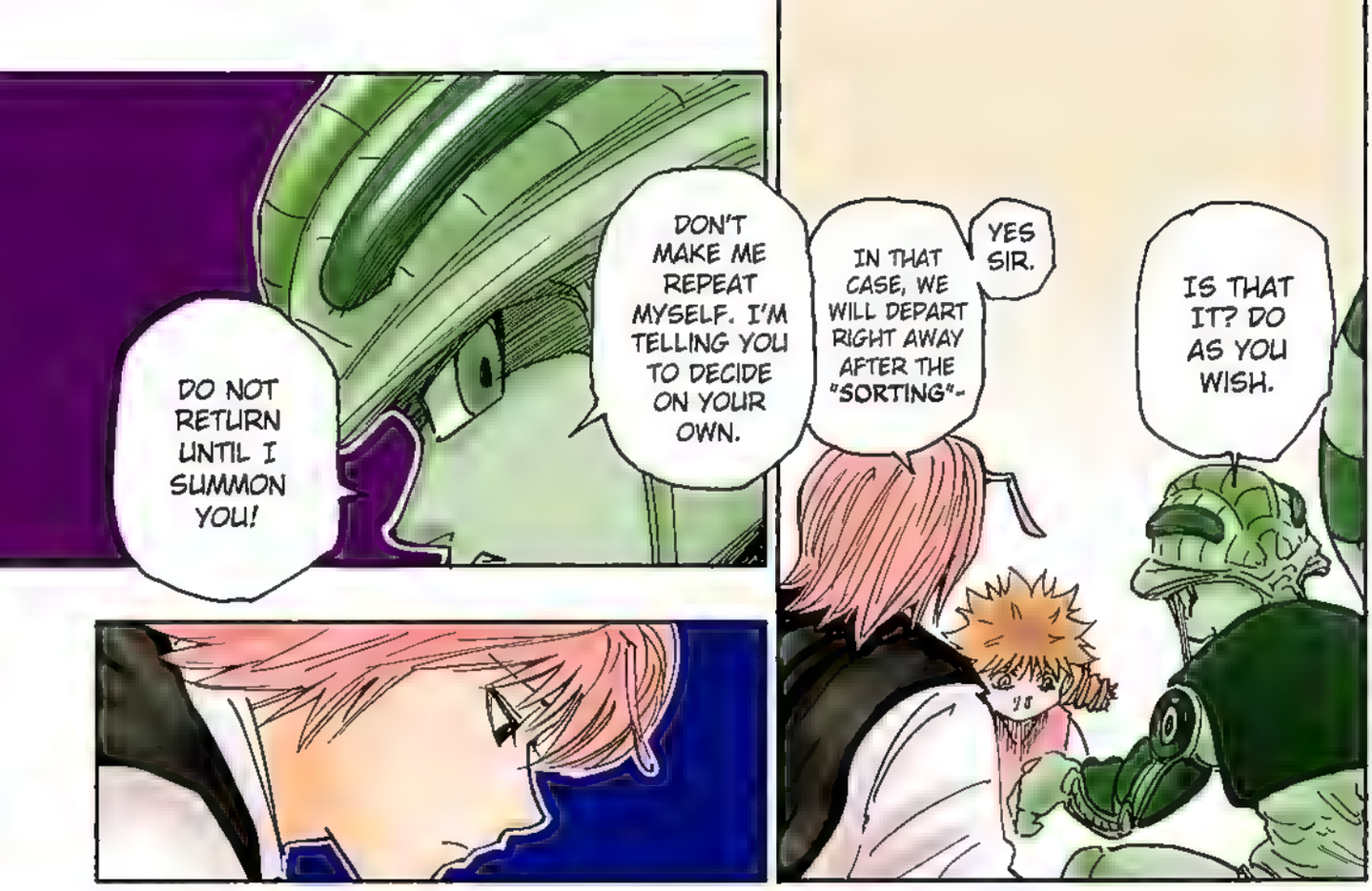
WHAT IS IT?
SIRE.


THE NUMBER OF CITIZENS TO PROCESS IN PEIJING HAS INCREASED BEYOND OUR EXPECTATIONS.
TWO DAYS REMAIN UNTIL THE NATIONAL RALLY.

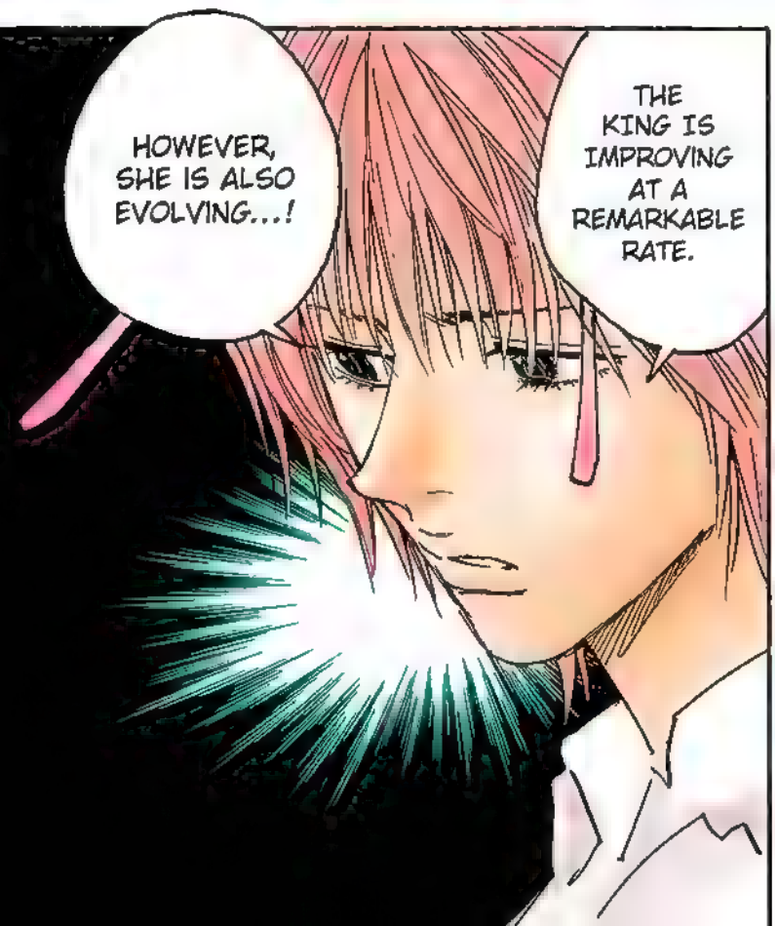
GET TO THE POINT.
AND?
BUT THE WEATHER FORECAST IS FAVORABLE, SO THE "SORTING" SHOULD PROCEED AS PLANNED.


IT'S FINE, SPEAK.
I HAVE SENSITIVE INFORMATION, SO WE SHOULD GO OUTSIDE...

I WOULD LIKE TO MOVE IT UP THE SCHEDULE.
FOR THE FOLLOWING "SORTING" ...


DO NOT RETURN UNTIL I SUMMON YOU!
DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF. I'M TELLING YOU TO DECIDE ON YOUR OWN.
IN THAT CASE, WE WILL DEPART RIGHT AWAY AFTER THE "SORTING"-
YES SIR.
IS THAT IT? DO AS YOU WISH.

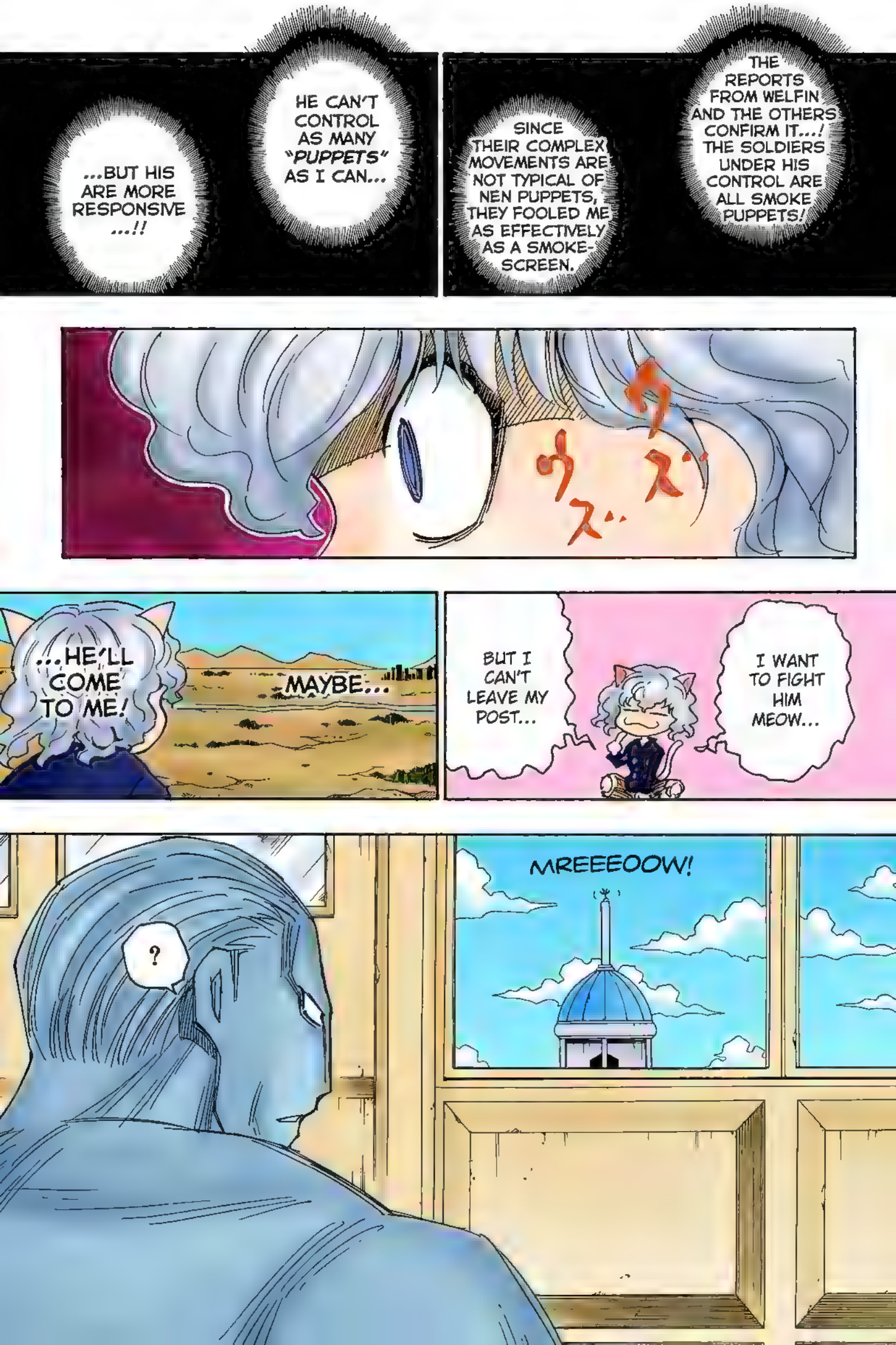
SO, YOU WERE CHASED OUT, TOO?
HEH HEH.

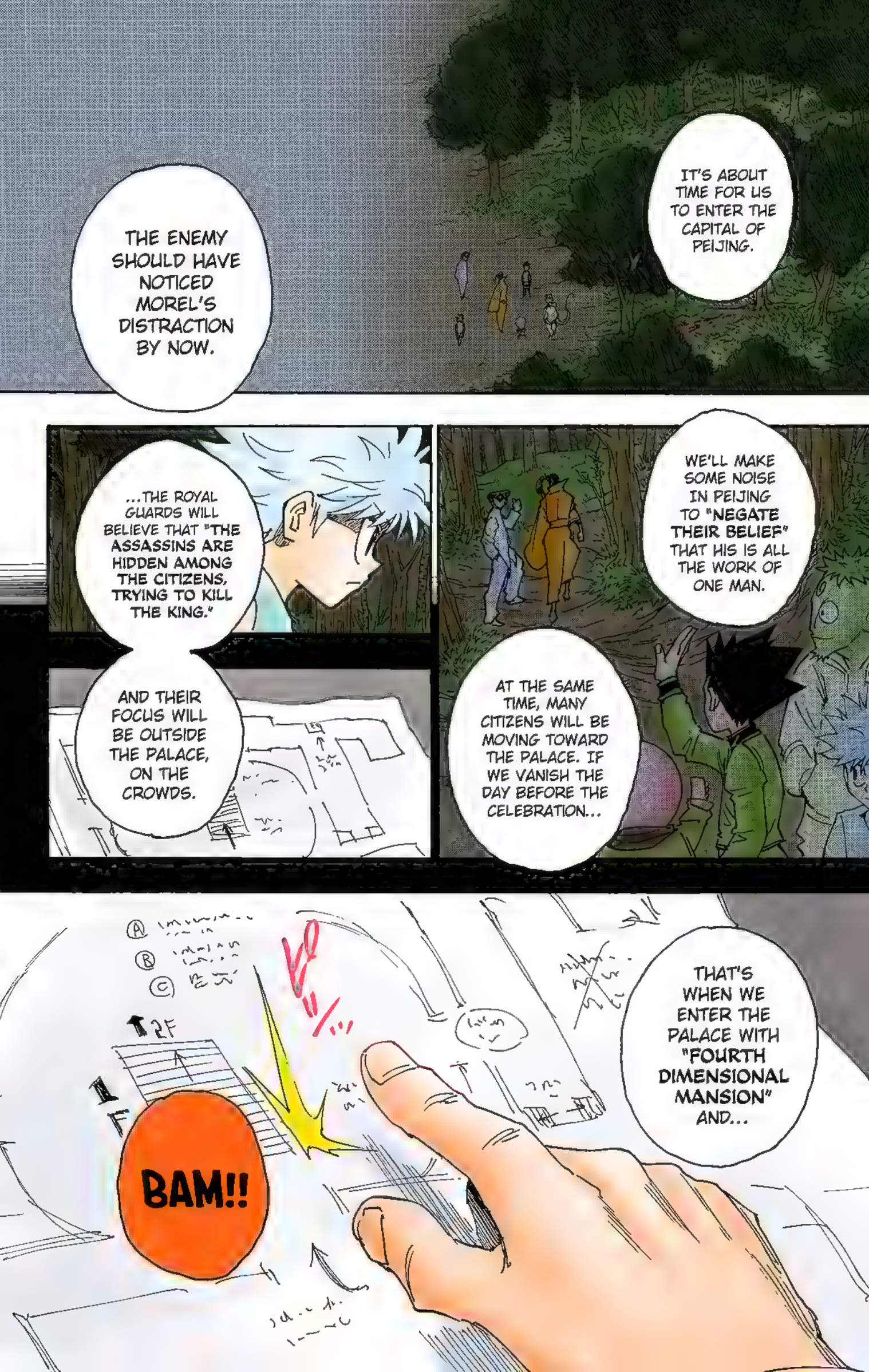

HOWEVER, SHE IS ALSO EVOLVING...!
THE KING IS IMPROVING AT A REMARKABLE RATE.

YOU THINK THAT WILL ONLY BE A FEW MORE MATCHES, RIGHT?
WELL, WE ONLY NEED TO WAIT FOR THE KING TO WIN.

WASN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID A WHILE AGO?
HUH ?
NO...

THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
I AM.
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT...
WELL, IT'S STILL ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE KING WINS, RIGHT?
.....
I AM NO LONGER ABLE TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME.
THE SAME MAN WHO DEFEATED LEOL...!!
I AM 100% POSITIVE THAT HE'S ACTING ON HIS OWN...

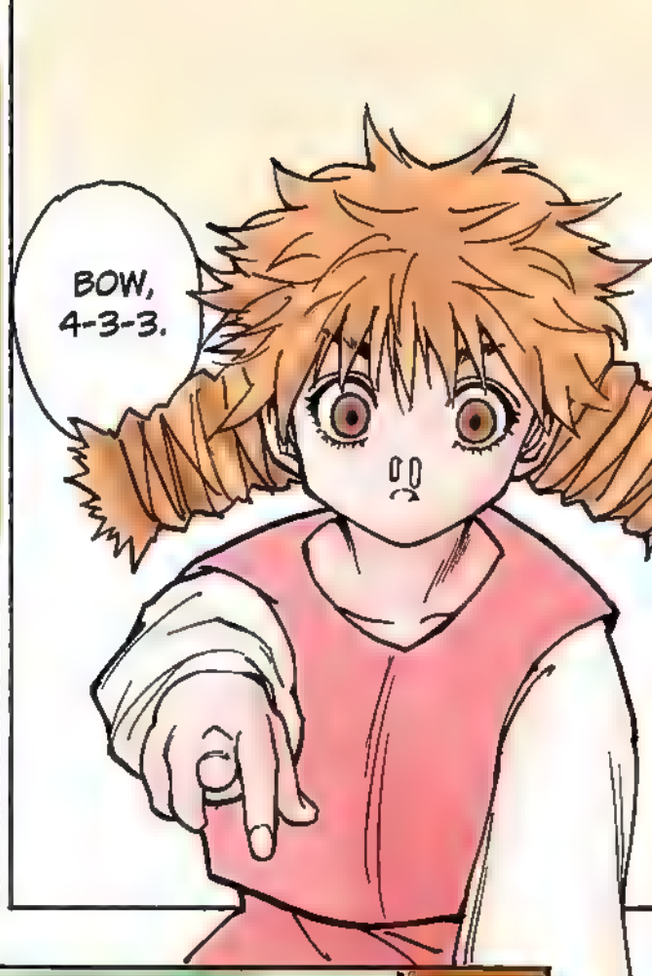

...BUT HIS ARE MORE RESPONSIVE ...!!
HE CAN'T CONTROL AS MANY "PUPPETS" AS I CAN...
SINCE THEIR COMPLEX MOVEMENTS ARE NOT TYPICAL OF NEN PUPPETS, THEY FOOLED ME AS EFFECTIVELY AS A SMOKE-SCREEN.
THE REPORTS FROM WELFIN AND THE OTHERS CONFIRM IT...! THE SOLDIERS UNDER HIS CONTROL ARE ALL SMOKE PUPPETS!
...HE'LL COME TO ME!
MAYBE...
BUT I CAN'T LEAVE MY POST...
I WANT TO FIGHT HIM MEOW...
?
MREEEOOW!

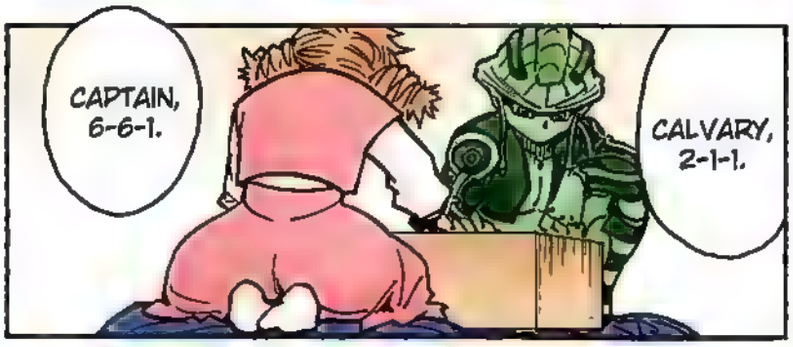

THE ENEMY SHOULD HAVE NOTICED MOREL'S DISTRACTION BY NOW.
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR US TO ENTER THE CAPITAL OF PEIJING.
...THE ROYAL GUARDS WILL BELIEVE THAT "THE ASSASSINS ARE HIDDEN AMONG THE CITIZENS, TRYING TO KILL THE KING."
AND THEIR FOCUS WILL BE OUTSIDE THE PALACE, ON THE CROWDS.
WE'LL MAKE SOME NOISE IN PEIJING TO "NEGATE THEIR BELIEF" THAT HIS IS ALL THE WORK OF ONE MAN.
AT THE SAME TIME, MANY CITIZENS WILL BE MOVING TOWARD THE PALACE. IF WE VANISH THE DAY BEFORE THE CELEBRATION...
Ⓐ
Ⓑ
Ⓒ
2F
1F
BAM!!
THAT'S WHEN WE ENTER THE PALACE WITH "FOURTH DIMENSIONAL MANSION" AND...

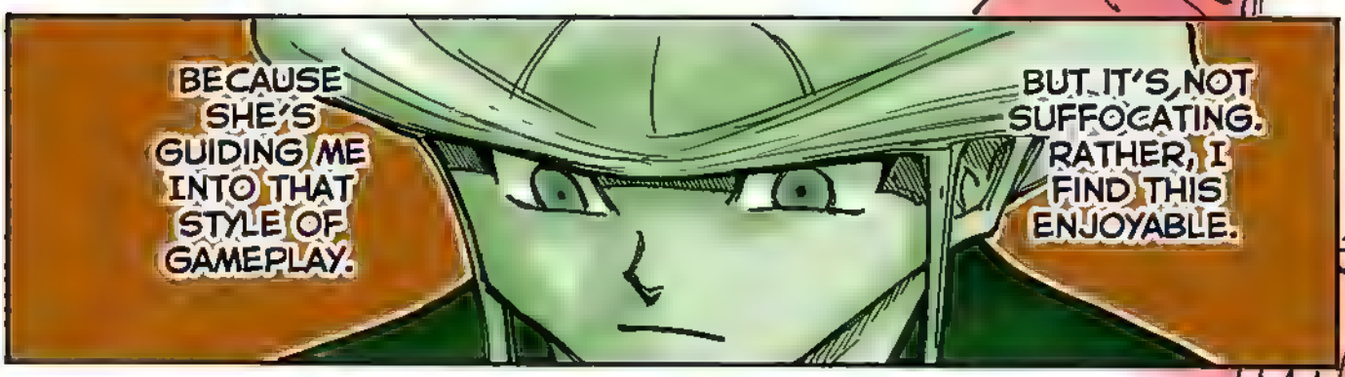
HERE ...!!
THE KING WILL DEFINITELY BE...
王
FROM THE THIRD-FLOOR THRONE ROOM...
...HE'LL BE WATCHING THE "SORTING" FROM THERE...!!
FEELS OFF...
SOME-THING...
...BE THERE?
WILL HE REALLY...
10 9 8 7 6
5 4 3 2 1

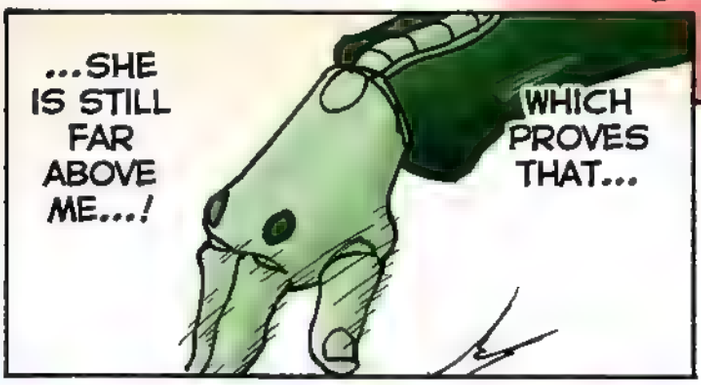
No.257 ◆ 1: PART ①

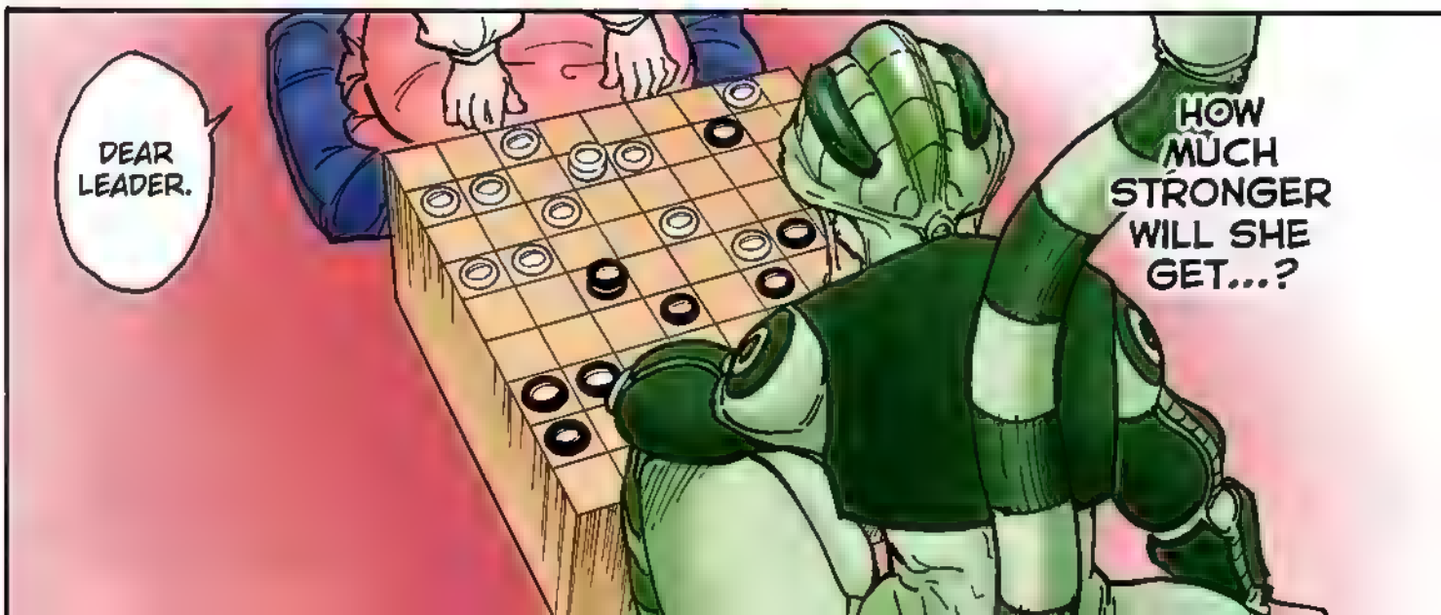
AS WE PLAY, SHE'S GETTING SHARPER.
SHE CONTINUES TO ATTACK WHERE I'M WEAK WITHOUT HESITATION.


BOW, 4-3-3.

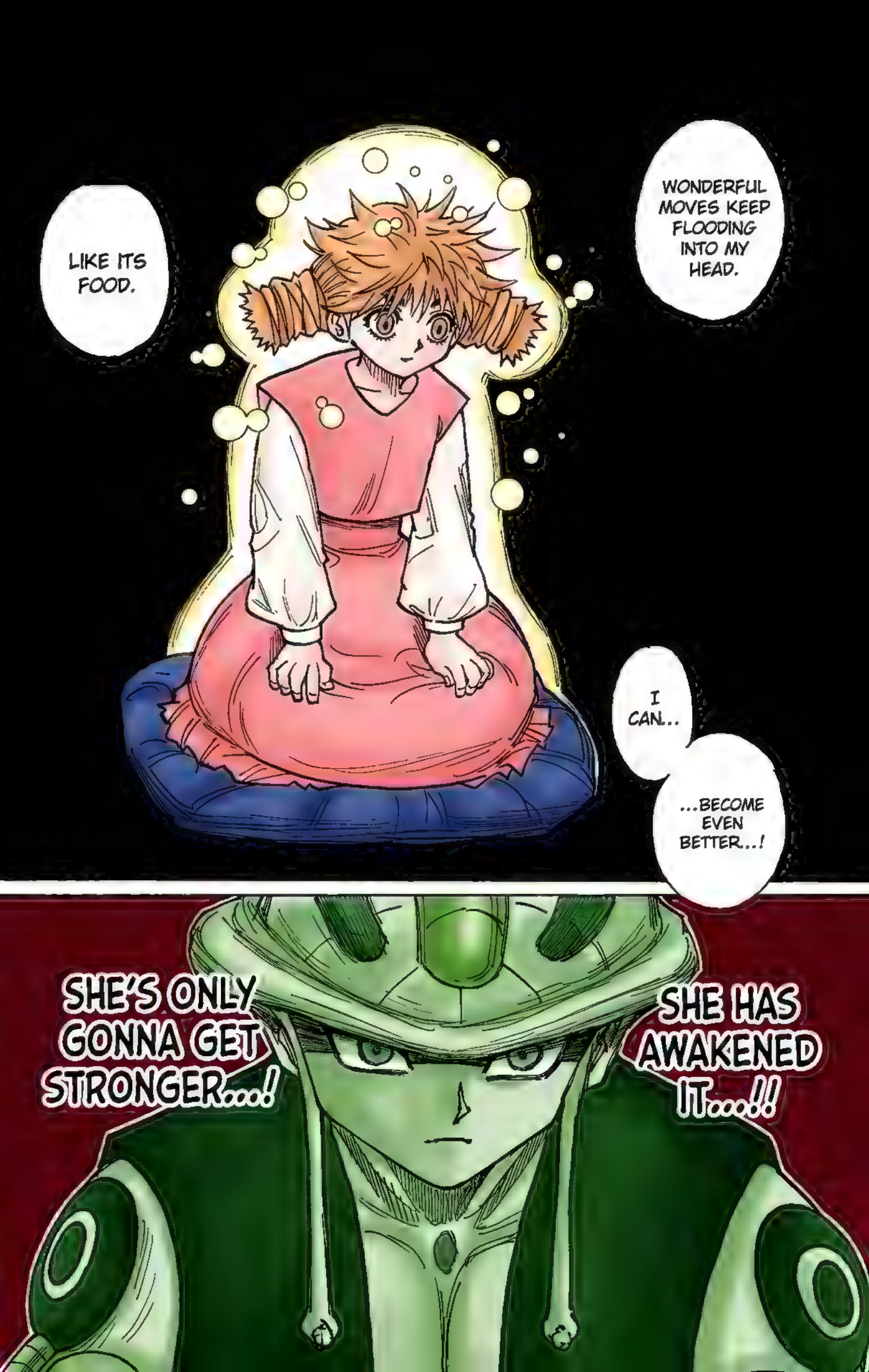

CAPTAIN, 6-6-1.
CALVARY, 2-1-1.

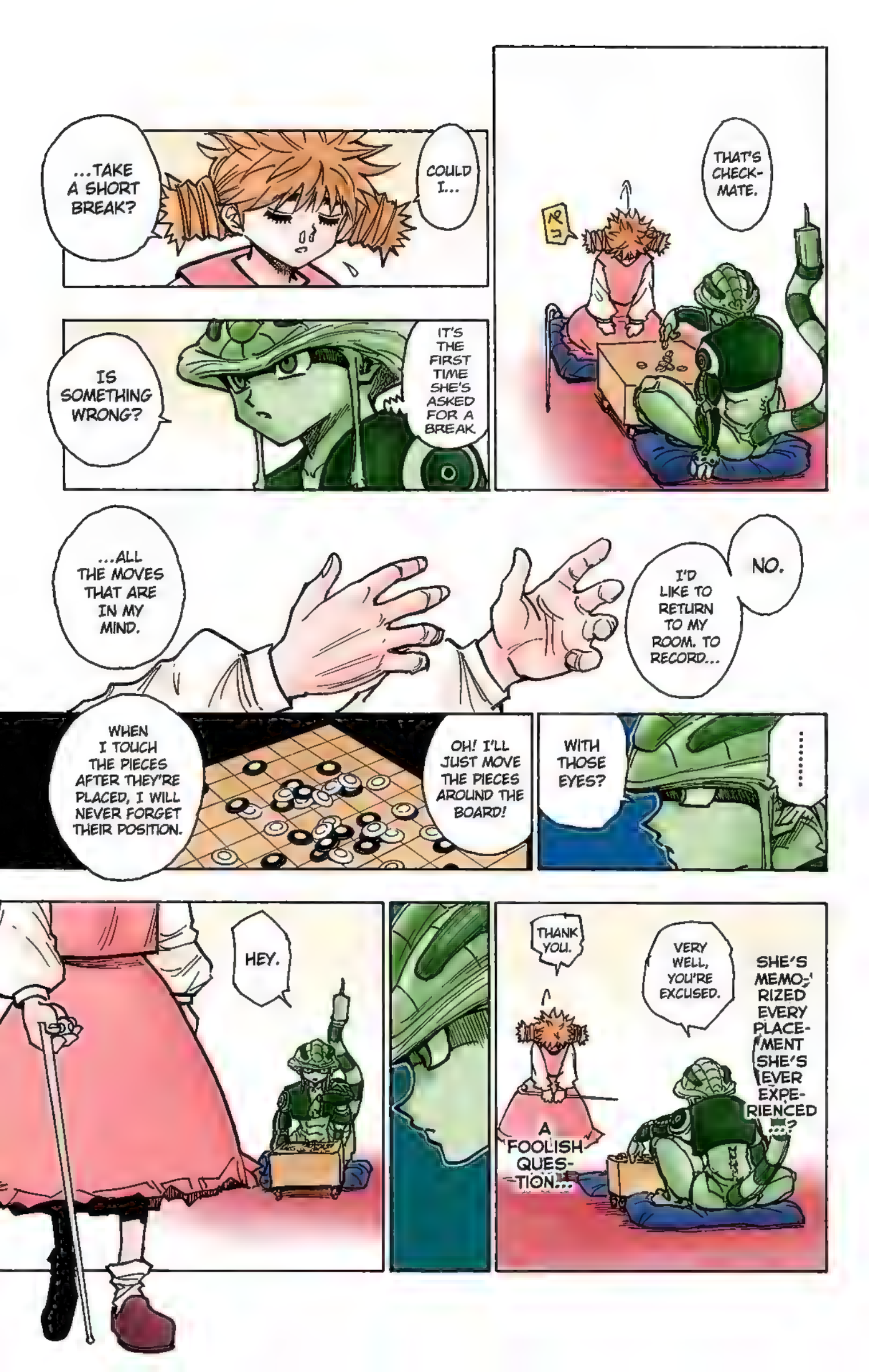

BECAUSE SHE'S GUIDING ME INTO THAT STYLE OF GAMEPLAY.
BUT IT'S NOT SUFFOCATING. RATHER, I FIND THIS ENJOYABLE.

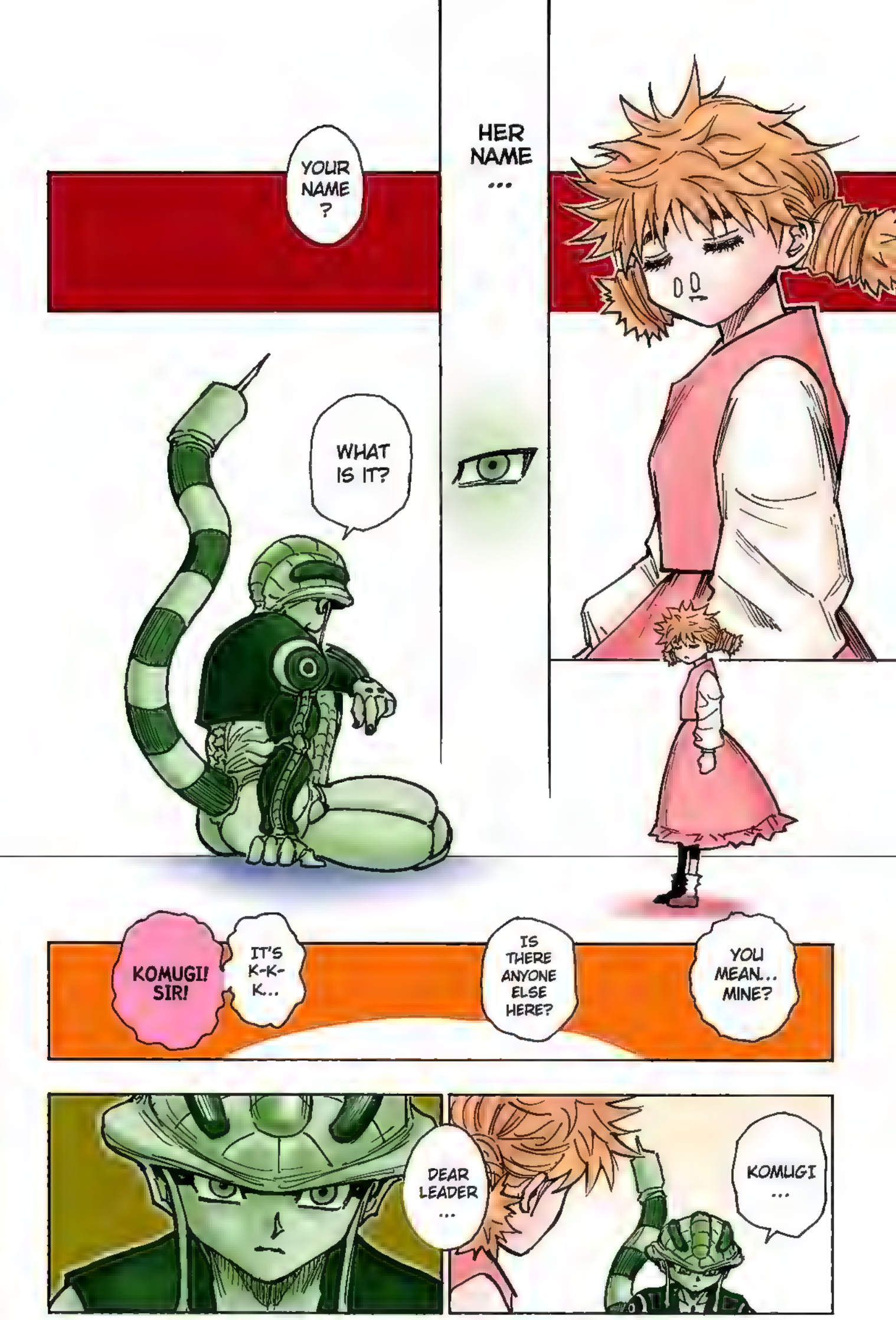

...SHE IS STILL FAR ABOVE ME...!
WHICH PROVES THAT...

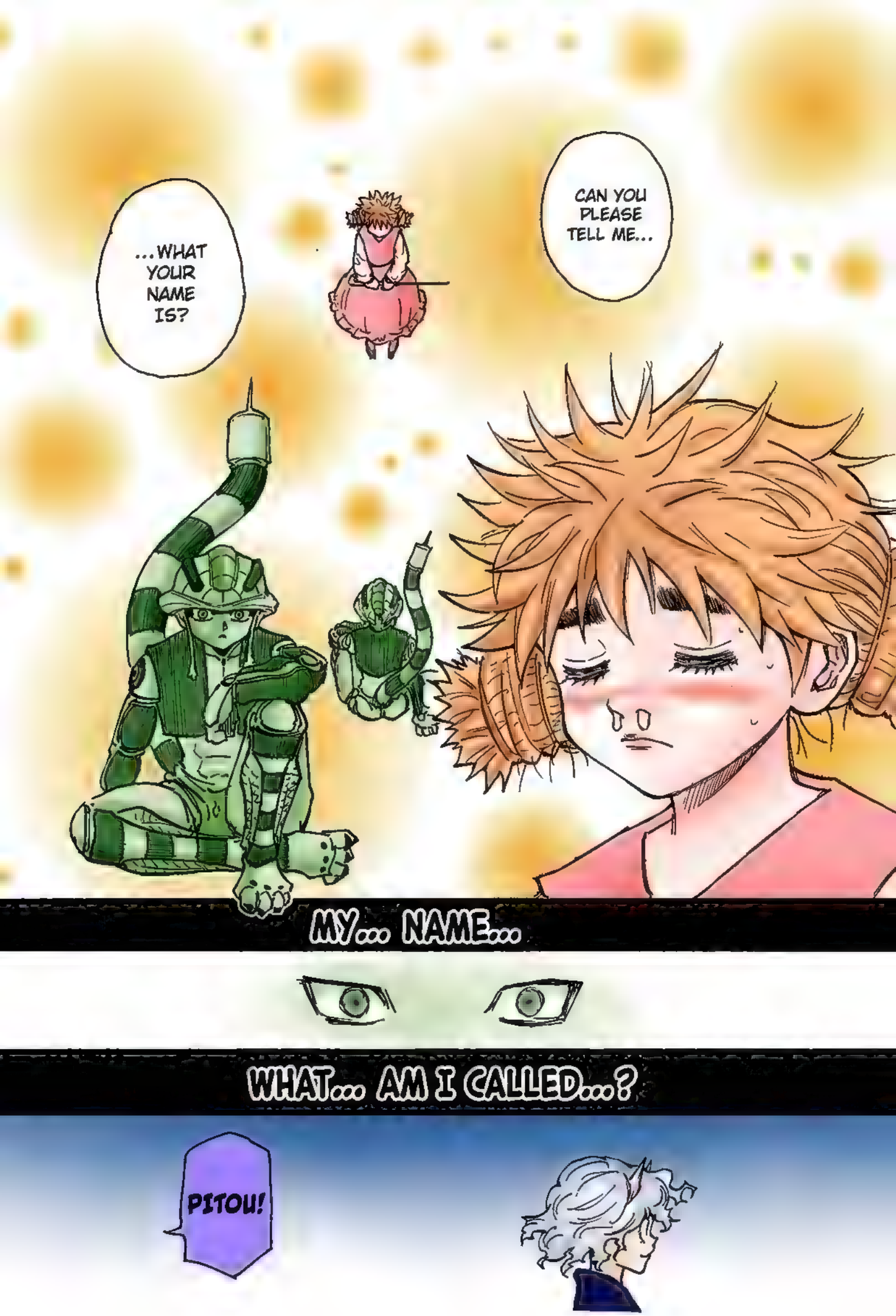

DEAR LEADER.
HOW MUCH STRONGER WILL SHE GET...?

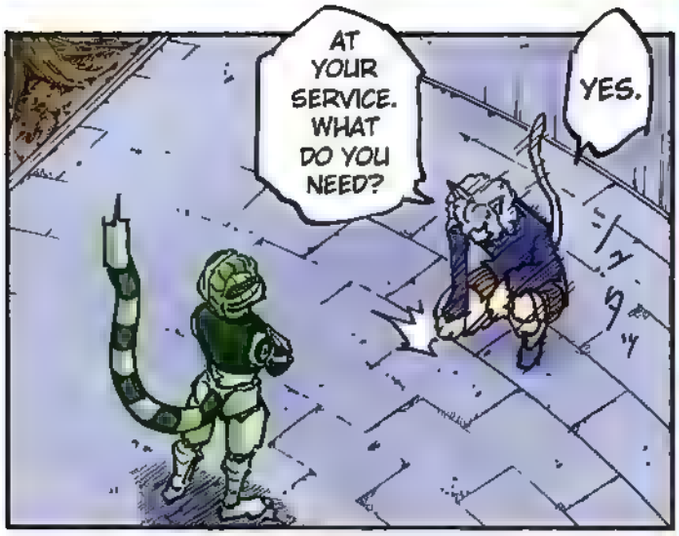
...WEIRD.
I FEEL...
IT'S AWAKENING...!!
IT DOESN'T STOP.

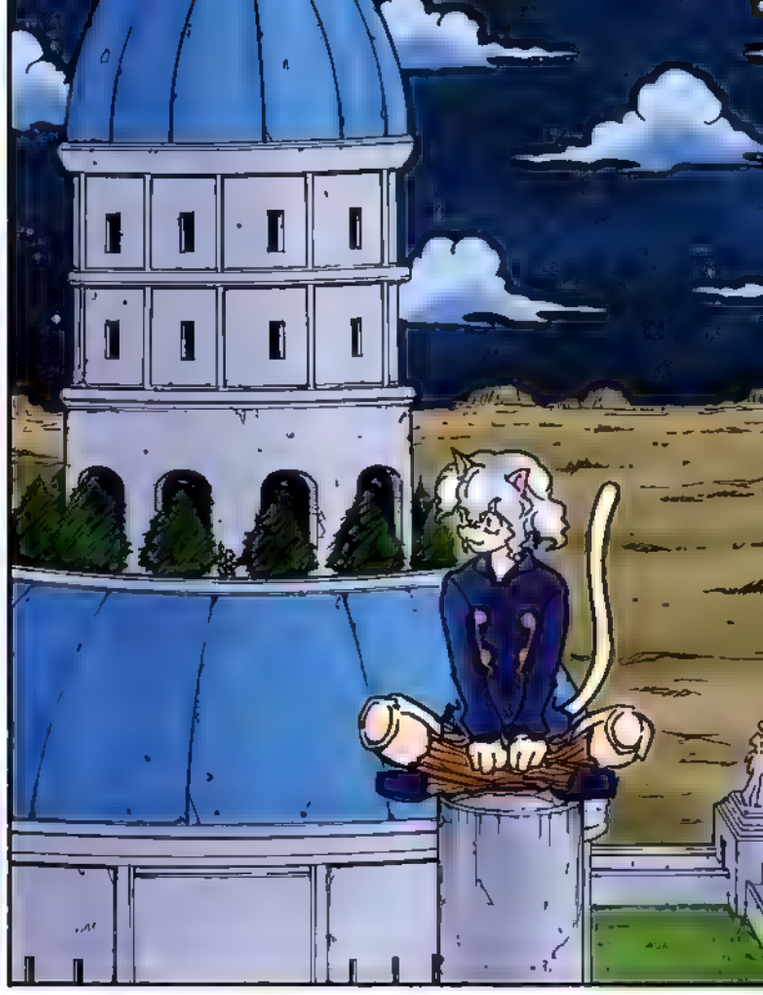

LIKE ITS FOOD.
WONDERFUL MOVES KEEP FLOODING INTO MY HEAD.
I CAN...
...BECOME EVEN BETTER...!
SHE'S ONLY GONNA GET STRONGER...!
SHE HAS AWAKENED IT...!!

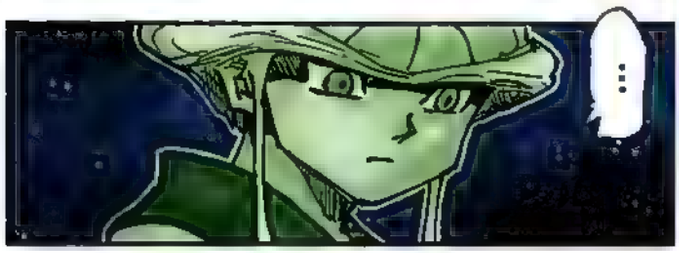

...TAKE A SHORT BREAK?
COULD I...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
IT'S THE FIRST TIME SHE'S ASKED FOR A BREAK.
THAT'S CHECK-MATE.
...ALL THE MOVES THAT ARE IN MY MIND.
NO.
I'D LIKE TO RETURN TO MY ROOM. TO RECORD...
WHEN I TOUCH THE PIECES AFTER THEY'RE PLACED, I WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR POSITION.
OH! I'LL JUST MOVE THE PIECES AROUND THE BOARD!
WITH THOSE EYES?
.....
HEY.
THANK YOU.
VERY WELL, YOU'RE EXCUSED.
SHE'S MEMORIZED EVERY PLACEMENT SHE'S EVER EXPERIENCED...?
A FOOLISH QUESTION...

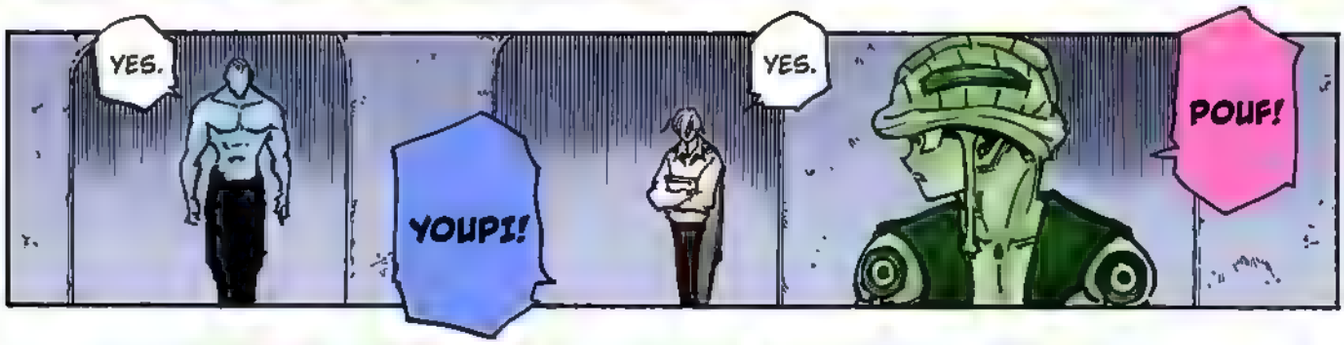

YOUR NAME ?
HER NAME ...
WHAT IS IT?
KOMUGI! SIR!
IT'S K-K-K...
IS THERE ANYONE ELSE HERE?
YOU MEAN... MINE?
DEAR LEADER ...
KOMUGI ...

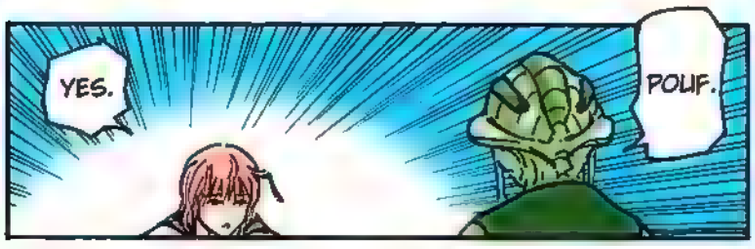

...WHAT YOUR NAME IS?
CAN YOU PLEASE TELL ME...
MY... NAME...
WHAT... AM I CALLED...?
PITOU!

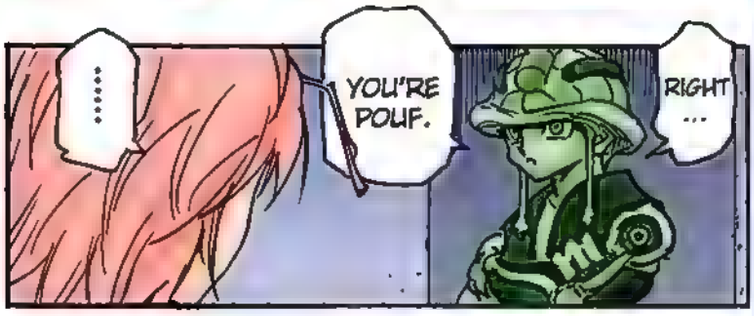

AT YOUR SERVICE. WHAT DO YOU NEED?
YES.

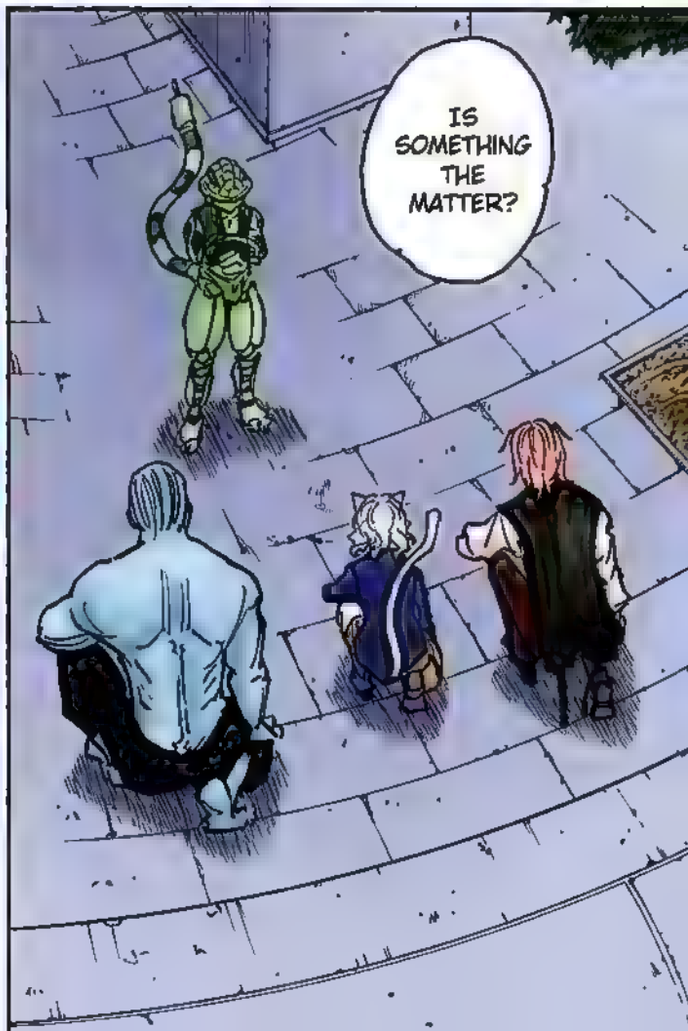



...

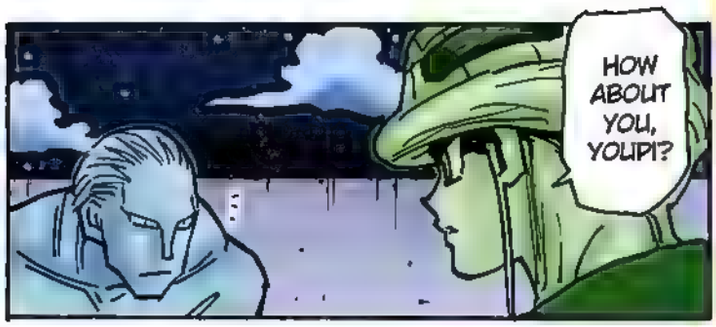

YES.
YOUPI!
YES.
POUF!


YES.
POUF.

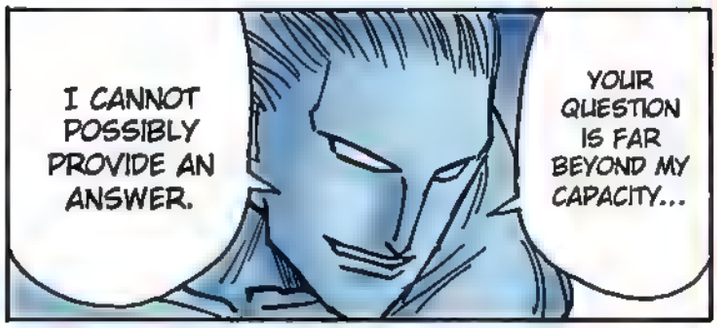

.....
YOU'RE POUF.
RIGHT ...

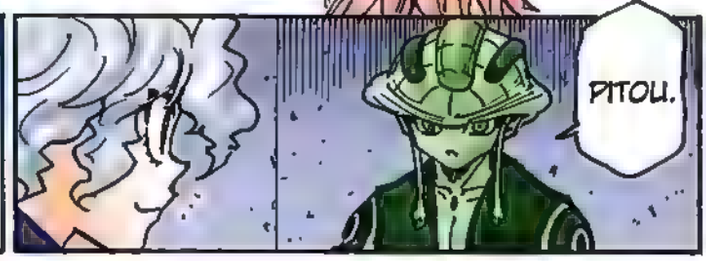

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

THEN ...
?
?
?
...IS MY NAME?
WHAT...
I SPEAK WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT, YOUR MAJESTY ...
YOU ARE THE KING.
YOU ARE THE ONE AND ONLY KING...!!
YOU HAVE NO OTHER NAME.
...THEY WILL ONLY KNOW WHO TRULY IS KING...
THEREFORE, WHEN ANYONE ELSE IN THIS WORLD REFERS TO "THE KING" ...
BUT WE WILL ELIMINATE THEM ALL.
AT THE MOMENT, THERE ARE IMPOSTORS USING THAT NAME WITHOUT PERMISSION.


HOW ABOUT YOU, YOUPI?

KING IS A TITLE. A TITLE CAN BE BESTOWED, AND IT IS NOT A NAME.
THAT ASSUMES THE OTHERS CAN BE ELIMINATED.


I CANNOT POSSIBLY PROVIDE AN ANSWER.
YOUR QUESTION IS FAR BEYOND MY CAPACITY...


PITOU.

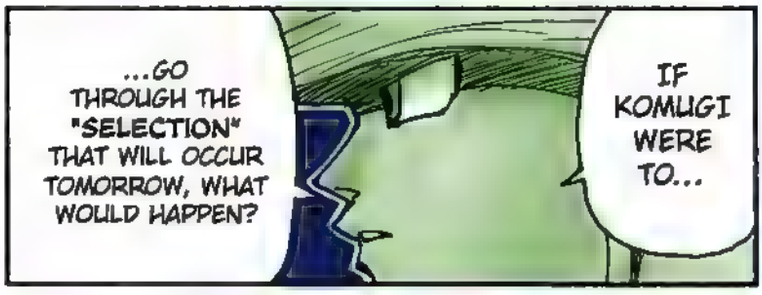
YOU SHOULD SELECT THE NAME THAT YOU FIND MOST PLEASING...
I BELIEVE THAT YOUR FEELINGS ARE WHAT MATTERS MOST, MY KING.

HMM ...
VERY WELL, THEN.

RIGHT NOW, OUR PRIORITY IS TO FINISH ALL THE PREPARATIONS BEFORE TOMORROW MORNING.
THIS IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT ...!
...TO CHOOSE A NAME FOR YOURSELF.
IT WOULDN'T BE TOO LATE AFTER THE "SORTING" ...
.....
THAT...
...IS WHY WE ARE HERE...!!
IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS, WE SHALL ADDRESS THEM..
...IS SOME-THING WRONG ...?
YOUR MAJESTY ...
...WAS BATHED IN LIGHT.
KOMUGI'S ENTIRE BODY...
HE BOTHERED TO LEARN HER NAME...
THE BLIND GIRL.
KOMUGI ...?

YES.
PITOU.

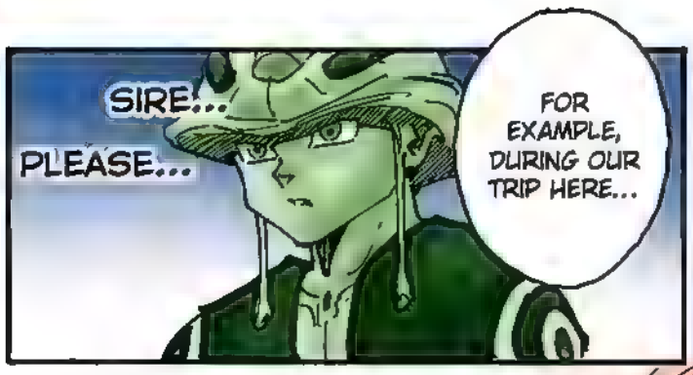
KOMUGI WILL NOW BECOME MUCH STRONGER.
SHE HAS AWAKENED HER NEN.
ALTHOUGH ONLY AT GUNGI.

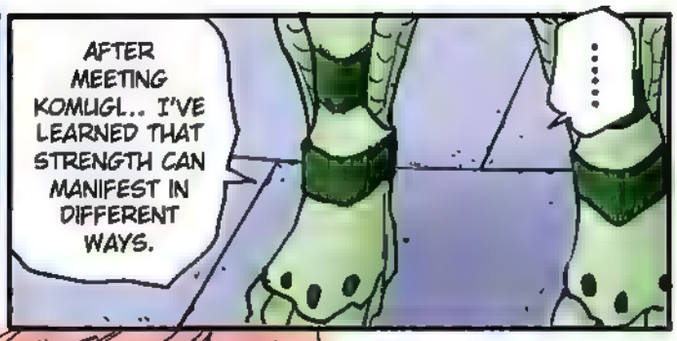

...GO THROUGH THE "SELECTION" THAT WILL OCCUR TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?
IF KOMUGI WERE TO...

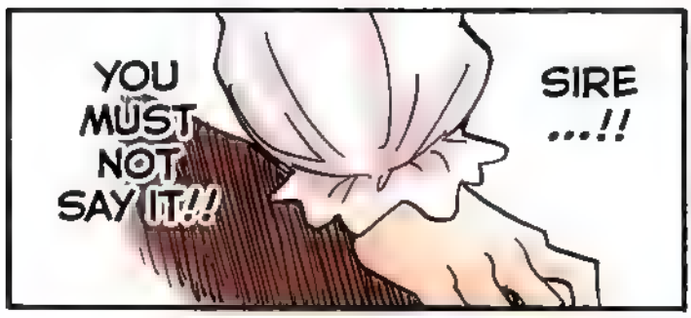
THE "SELECTION" CHOOSES HUMANS WITH THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRENGTH TO SERVE AS SOLDIERS.
SHE WOULD DIE.
THE SURVIVORS WILL BE THOSE WHO DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENT COMBAT CAPABILITIES.

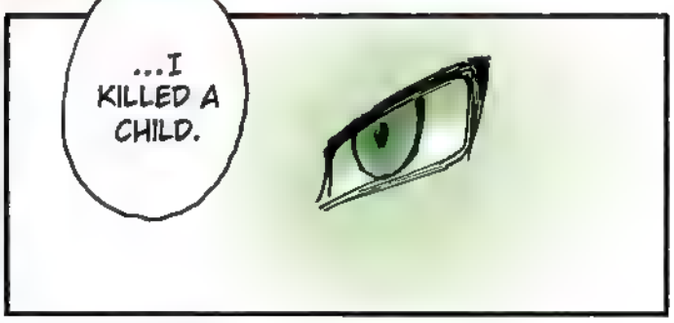
PLEASE...

SIRE...







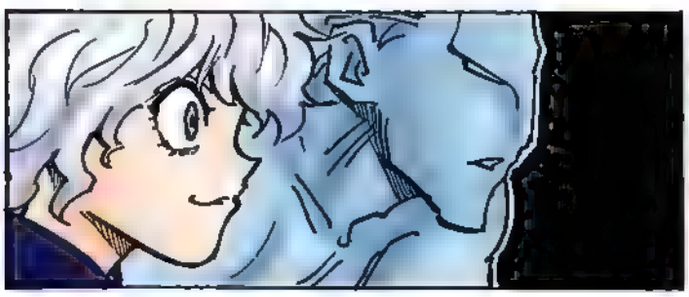


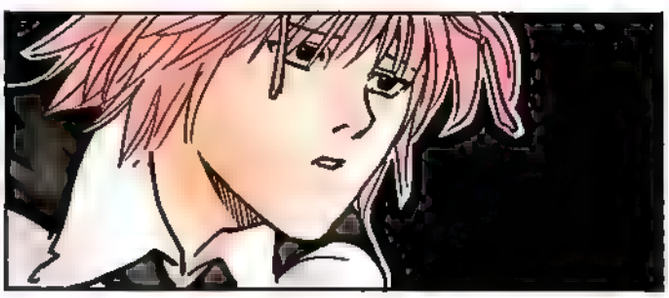
IT'S NOT APPROPRIATE !!

PERHAPS THAT CHILD...

THIS ISN'T BECOMING OF YOU!!

...THAT POTENTIAL.
YET I EXTIN-GUISHED ...
...ON HIS OWN ACTIONS!!
...CANNOT REPENT...
...NO REAL REASON.
PLEASE...
I EXTIN-GUISHED IT FOR..
NO MATTER WHAT.
...ANY MORE !!!
KING ...!!
YOU MUSTN'T SAY...
I AM..





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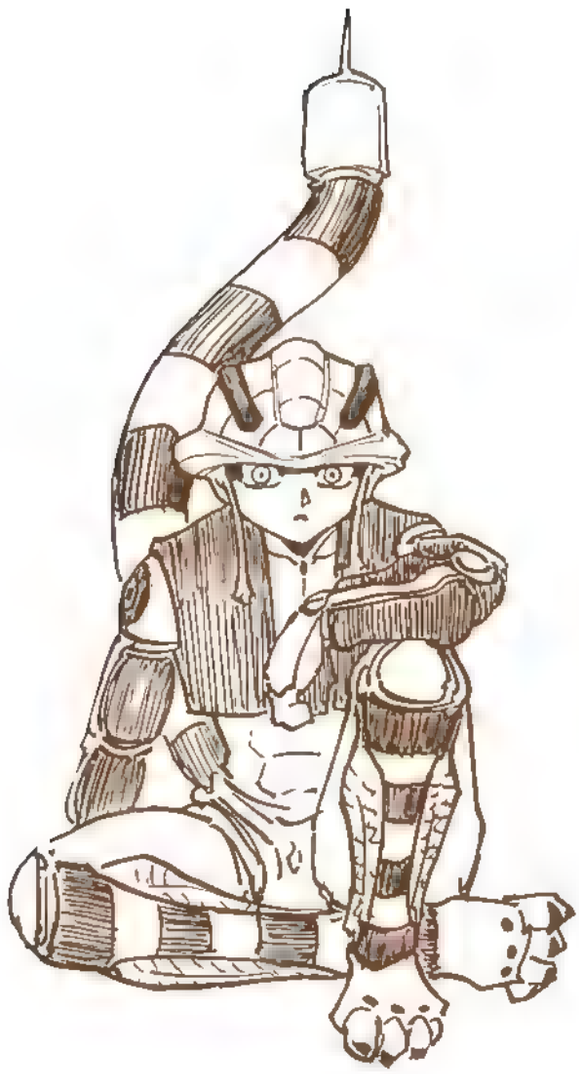


No.258 ◆ 1: PART ②

I APPEAR WITH NO WARNING TO ROB COUNTLESS BEINGS OF THEIR INFERIOR STRENGTH.

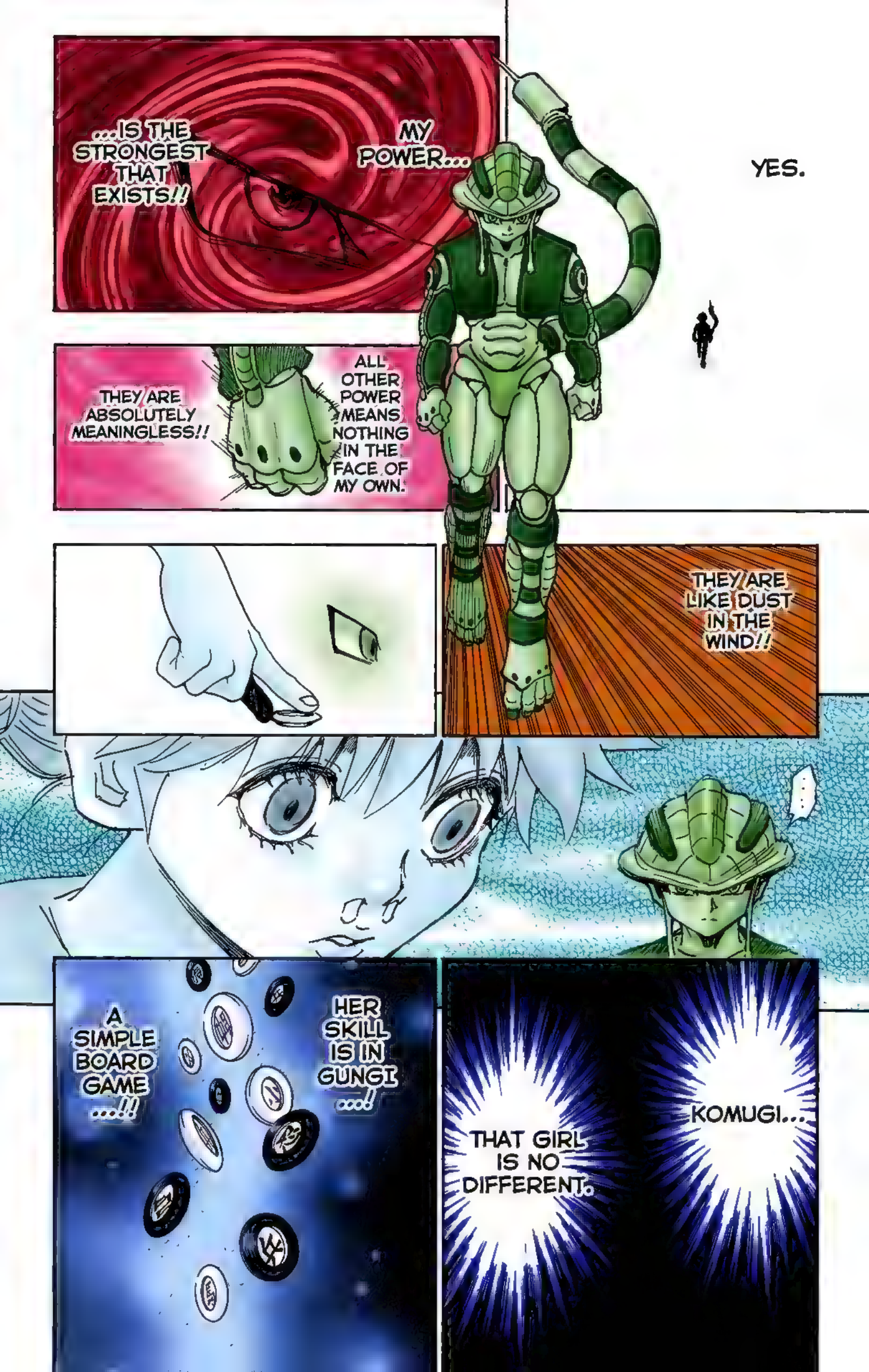
TO CRUSH AND TO DESTROY...!!

THAT...

...IS MY POWER.

VIOLENCE...
...IS THE STRONGEST POWER IN THIS WORLD!!

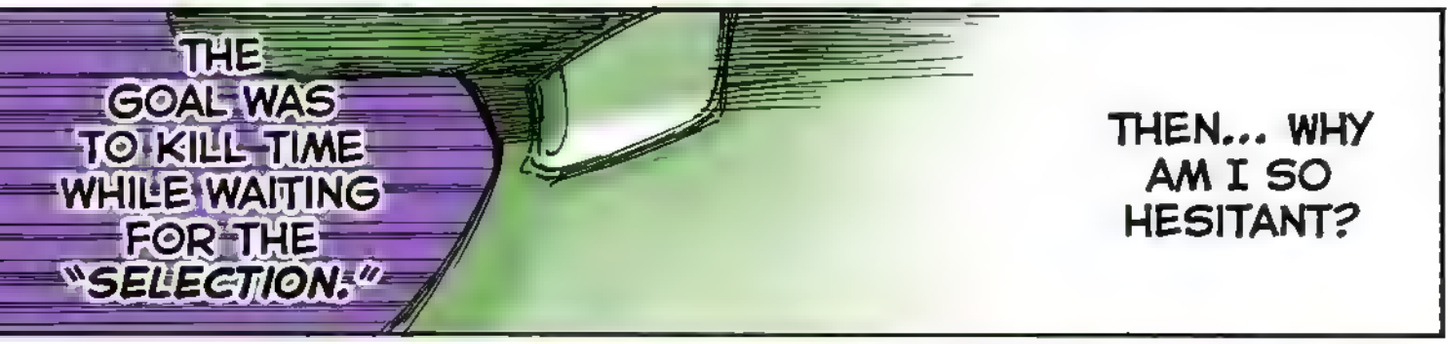
...NOT WORTHY OF BEING A ROYAL GUARD...
I AM...
AND I NEARLY INSULTED THE KING...
I JUMPED TO THE WRONG CONCLUSION ...
WHY NOT?
?
MIGHT HAVE REGRETTED HIS ACTIONS.
I WAS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO THINK THAT THE KING...
THAT IS CORRECT ...
YES.
YOU ALWAYS THINK TOO MUCH.
YES.
THAT IS TRUE...
THE KING HAS CHANGED SINCE THAT GIRL ARRIVED.
WELL...
HMM ...
SIGH ...
TO THINK MY MIND OPERATES ON THE SAME LEVEL AS YOURS...
AAAHH...
IF THE GIRL WILL IMPEDE THE KING, WE SHOULD KILL HER.

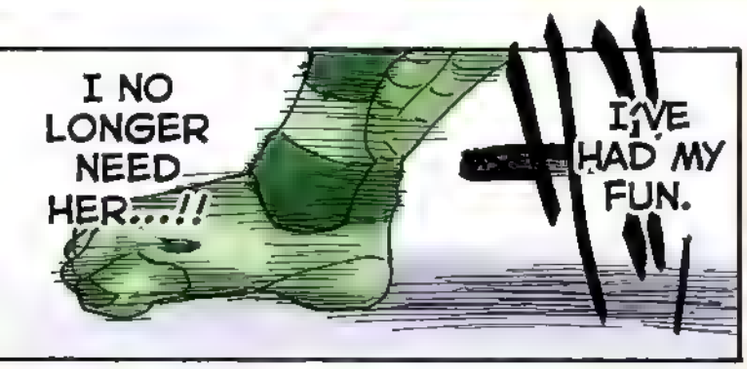

...IS THE STRONGEST THAT EXISTS!!
MY POWER...
YES.
THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY MEANINGLESS!!
ALL OTHER POWER MEANS NOTHING IN THE FACE OF MY OWN.
THEY ARE LIKE DUST IN THE WIND!!
...
A SIMPLE BOARD GAME ...!!
HER SKILL IS IN GUNGI ...!
THAT GIRL IS NO DIFFERENT.
KOMUGI...

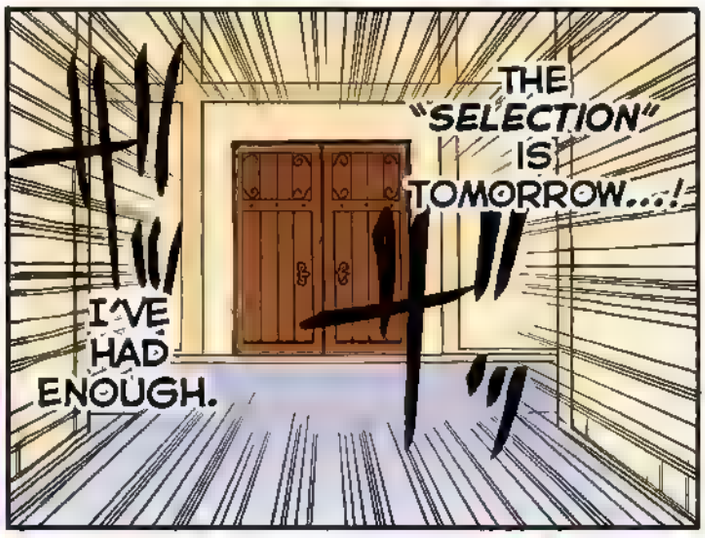
I CAN IMMEDIATELY KILL HER...!!
IF I CHANGE MY MIND...

...WITH THE BAREST TOUCH!!
I COULD TURN HER INTO NO MORE THAN A PILE OF FLESH...

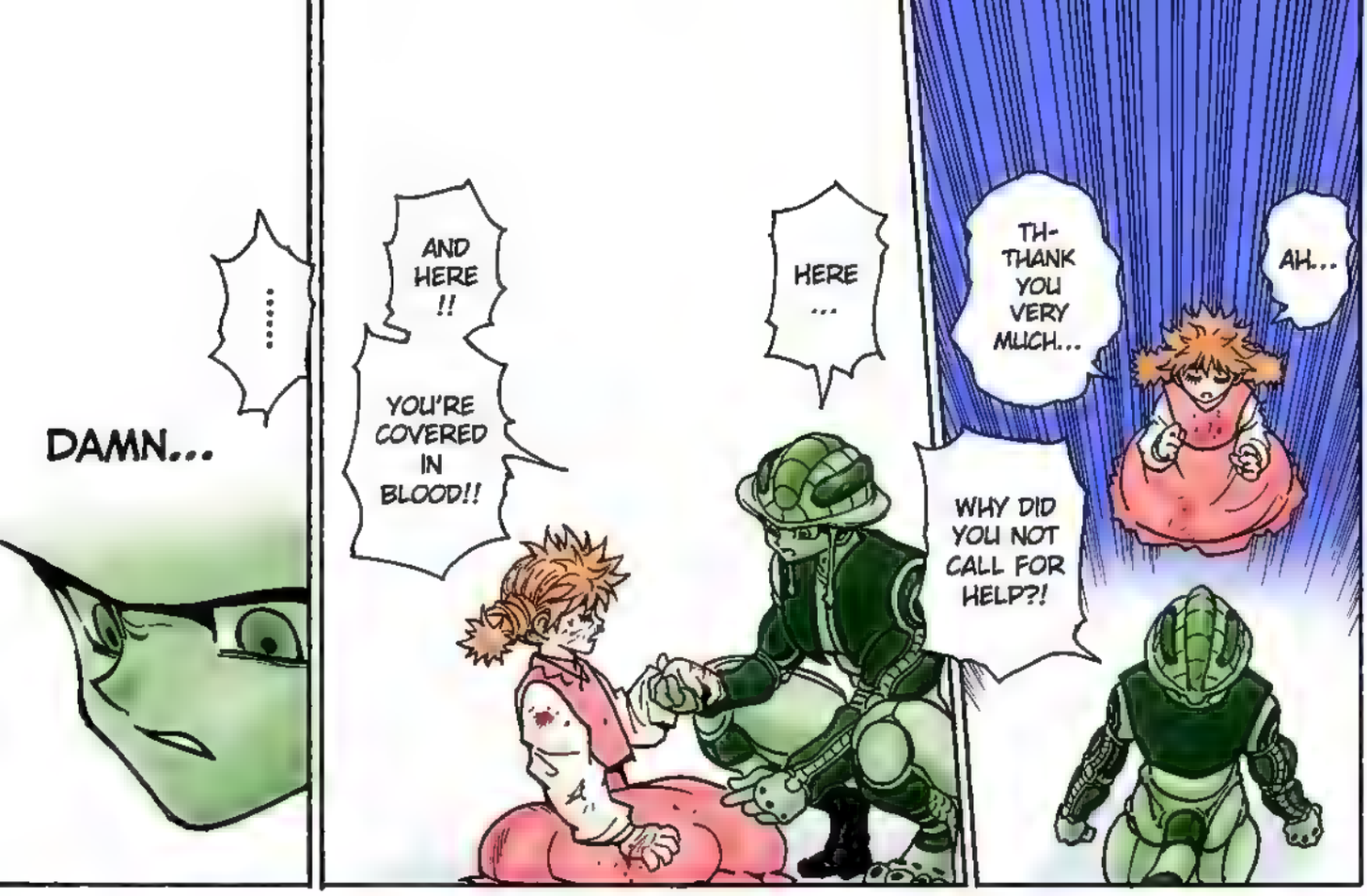
...DEPENDS ON MY WHIM.
SO, HER LIFE...

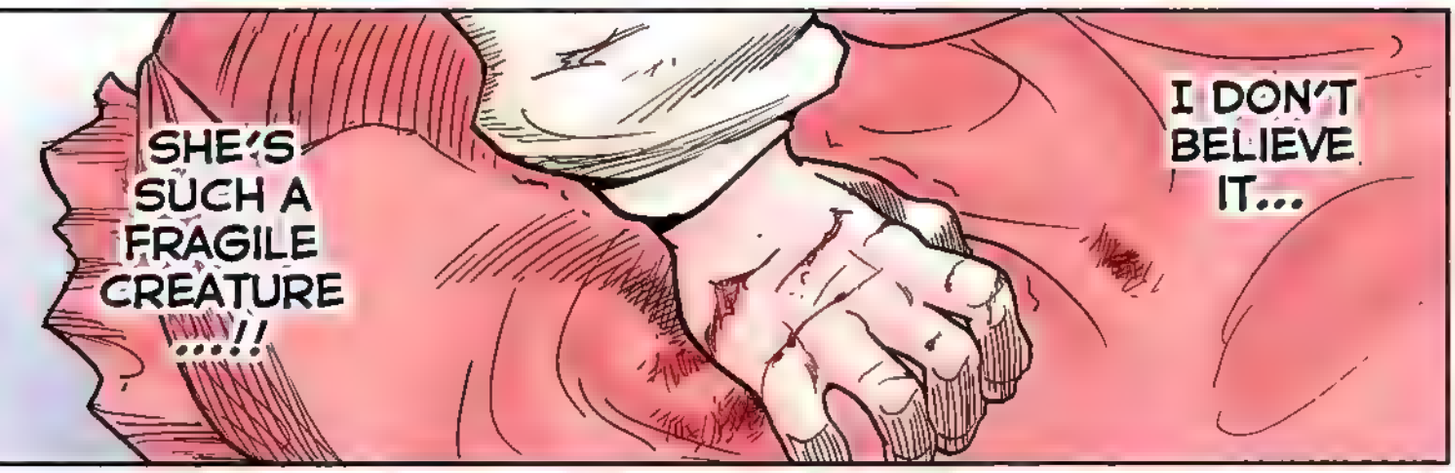

THE GOAL WAS TO KILL TIME WHILE WAITING FOR THE "SELECTION."
THEN... WHY AM I SO HESITANT?


I NO LONGER NEED HER...!!
I'VE HAD MY FUN.

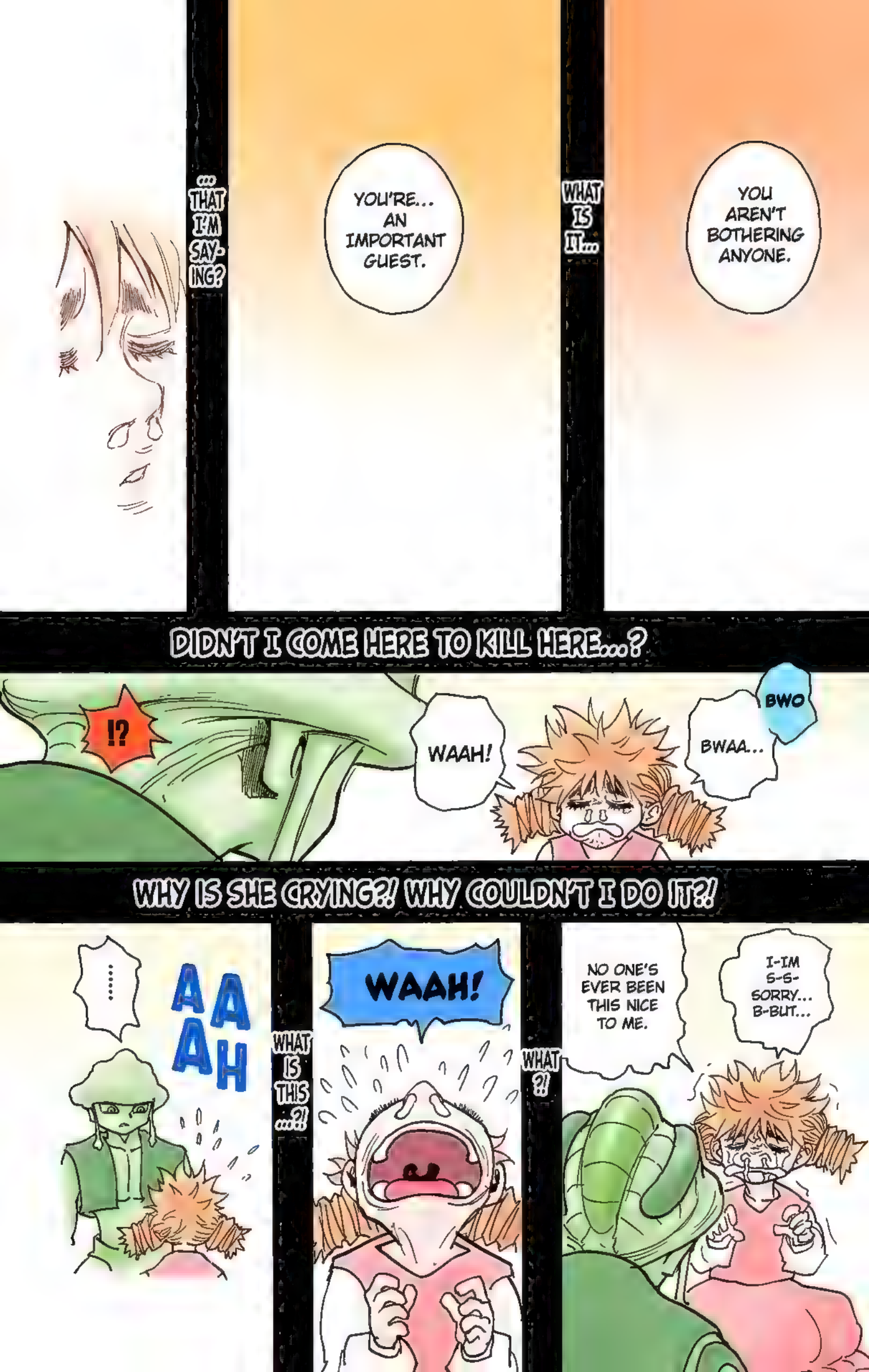

THE "SELECTION" IS TOMORROW...!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

I'LL KILL HER...
!!!!
RIGHT NOW!!


DAMN...
.....
AND HERE !!
YOU'RE COVERED IN BLOOD!!
HERE ...
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
AH...
WHY DID YOU NOT CALL FOR HELP?!


SHE'S SUCH A FRAGILE CREATURE ....!!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT...

I DIDN'T WANT TO BOTHER... ANYONE ELSE...
BECAUSE... IT'S STILL EARLY...
WHAT ?
AH...
I...


...THAT I'M SAYING?
YOU'RE... AN IMPORTANT GUEST.
WHAT IS IT...
YOU AREN'T BOTHERING ANYONE.
DIDN'T I COME HERE TO KILL HERE...?
!?
WAAH!
BWAA...
BWO
WHY IS SHE CRYING?! WHY COULDN'T I DO IT?!
.....
AAAH
WHAT IS THIS...?!
WAAH!
WHAT?!
NO ONE'S EVER BEEN THIS NICE TO ME.
I-IM S-S-SORRY... B-BUT...

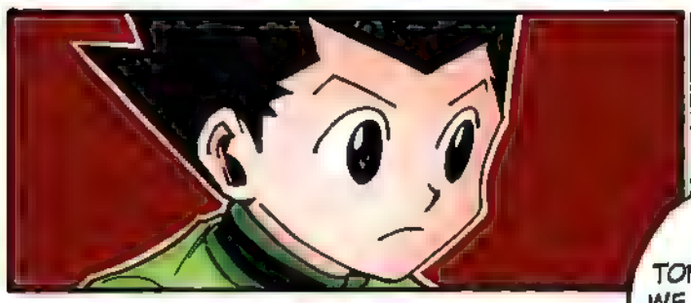
WHAT IS THIS CREATURE?!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...!!

AND ME...

....DO I WANT TO DO WITH HER...?!

WHAT...

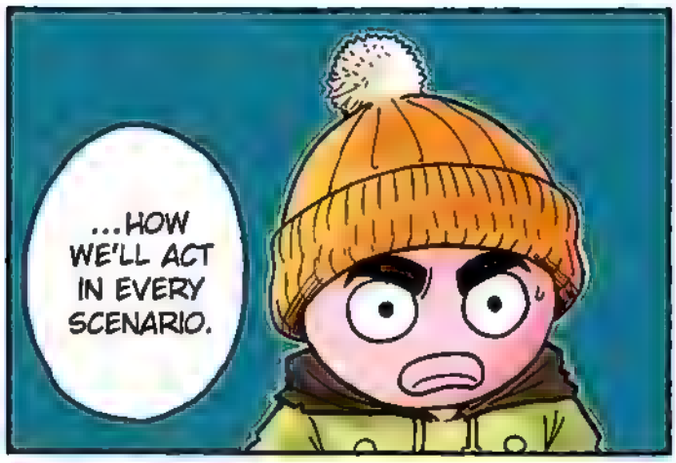


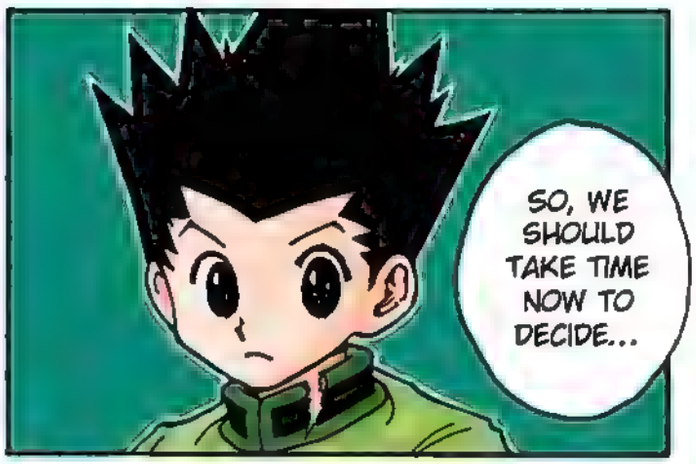
TONIGHT WE MAKE OUR MOVE.
LET'S DO ONE FINAL CHECK AND RUN THIS THROUGH.

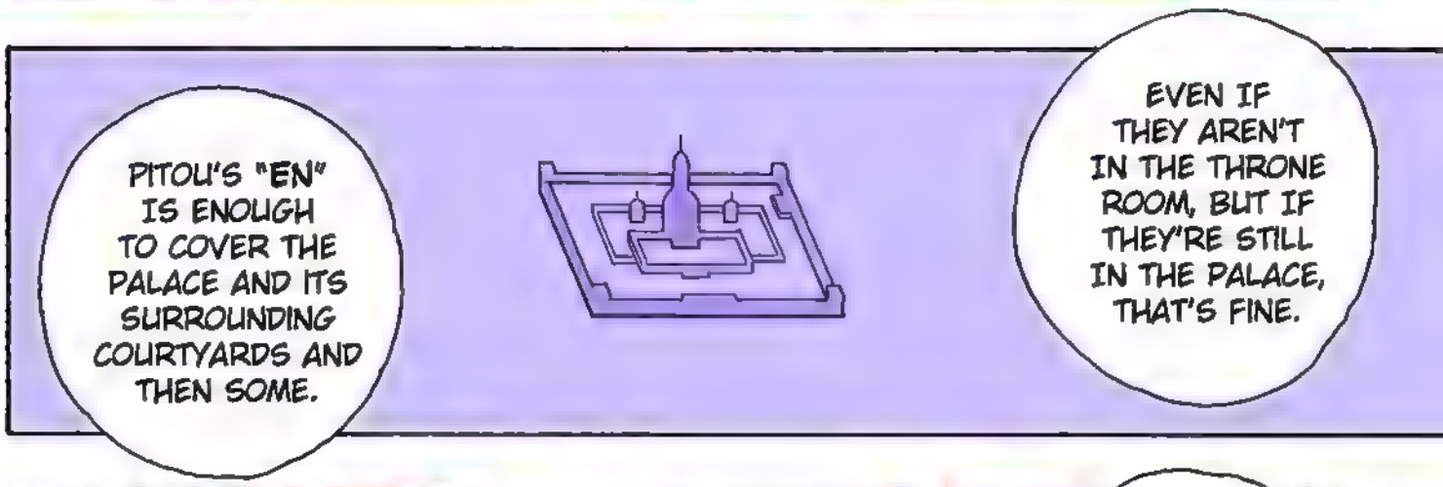
...WE HAVE 19 HOURS REMAINING.
BEFORE THE SELECTION STARTS TONIGHT AT MIDNIGHT...

IKALGO WILL TAKE THE NORTHEAST ELEVATOR DOWN TO THE BASEMENT TO SEARCH FOR PALM.
ONCE INSIDE, GON AND I IMMEDIATELY HEAD UP TO THE CENTRAL STAIR-WAY, STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE THRONE ROOM.
GOT IT
IF YOU FIND HER, ESCAPE WITHOUT US.

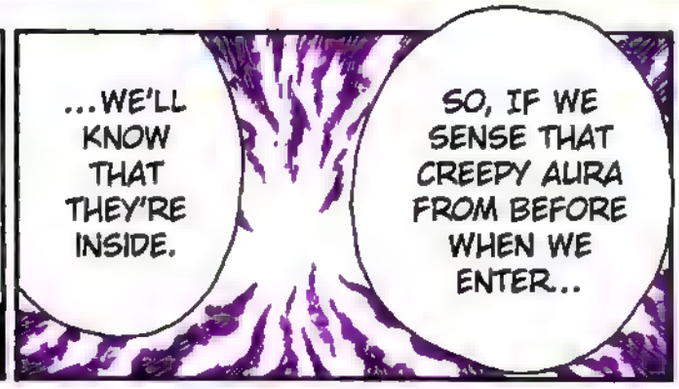
AREN'T YOU CONTRA-DICTING YOURSELF ?
BUT THE "UNUSUAL" HAPPENS PRETTY OFTEN.
WELL... IT'S HIGHLY UNLIKELY.
THE PROBLEM IS THAT IF THEY'RE NOT THERE WHEN WE ARE.
IF THE KING AND HIS THREE ROYAL GUARDS ARE IN THE THRONE ROOM, WE PROCEED AS WE PLANNED.
WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF THAT HAPPENING?
YOU'RE REALLY HUNG UP ON THAT, KILLUA.
...THAT'S TYPICALLY WHEN THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS ON THAT DAY.
WHEN YOU'RE WAITING FOR "SOMEONE TO BE IN A CERTAIN PLACE AT A CERTAIN TIME"...!!
WE RESEARCHED THE ENEMY'S BEHAVIOR EXTENSIVELY BEFORE DECIDING "ON A DAY" FOR THE ATTACK.
...TO MAKE SURE THAT I ENSURE MY SUCCESS.
IN MY OLD JOB, I COULD WAIT FOR THE NEXT CHANCE...
THE UNUSUAL ALWAYS HAPPENS ON THE DAY YOU'VE CHOSEN.
IN MY "OLD JOBS", I SAW THIS ALL THE TIME.
A MOMENT'S HESITATION CAN MEAN DEATH.
WE CAN'T WAIT. ONCE WE MOVE, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK.
BUT THIS TIME, IT ISN'T AN OPTION ...!!

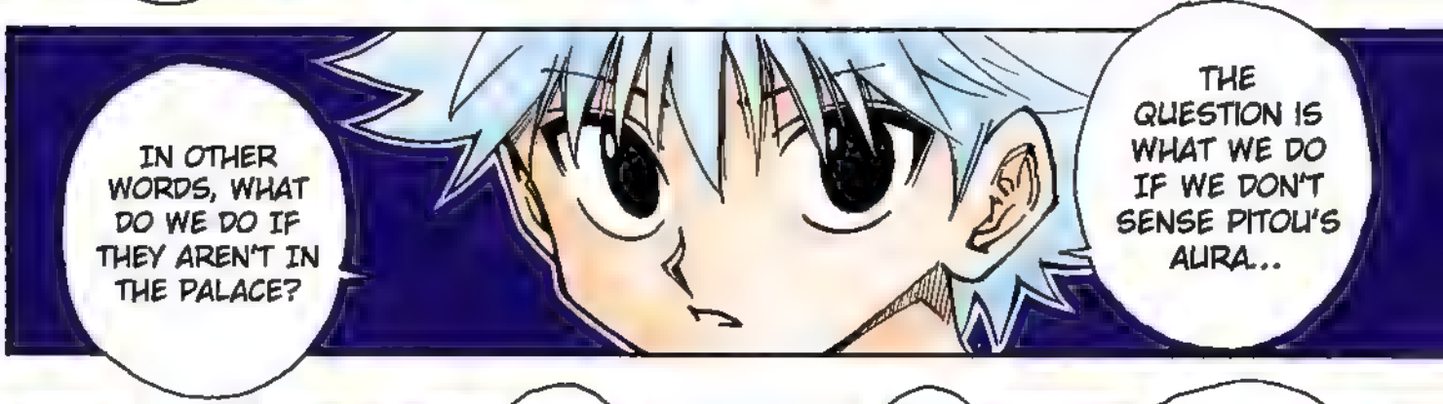

...HOW WE'LL ACT IN EVERY SCENARIO.

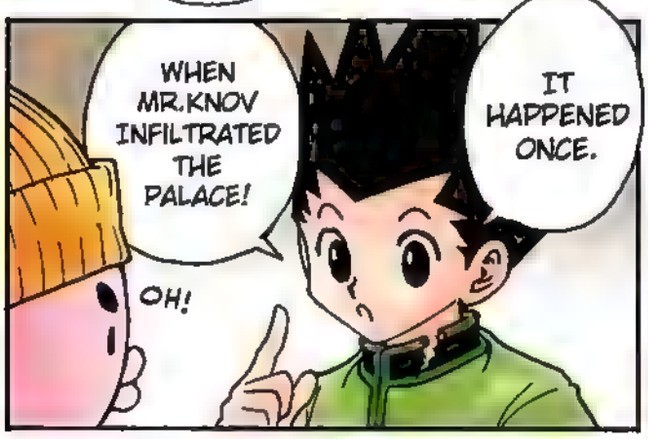

SO, WE SHOULD TAKE TIME NOW TO DECIDE...

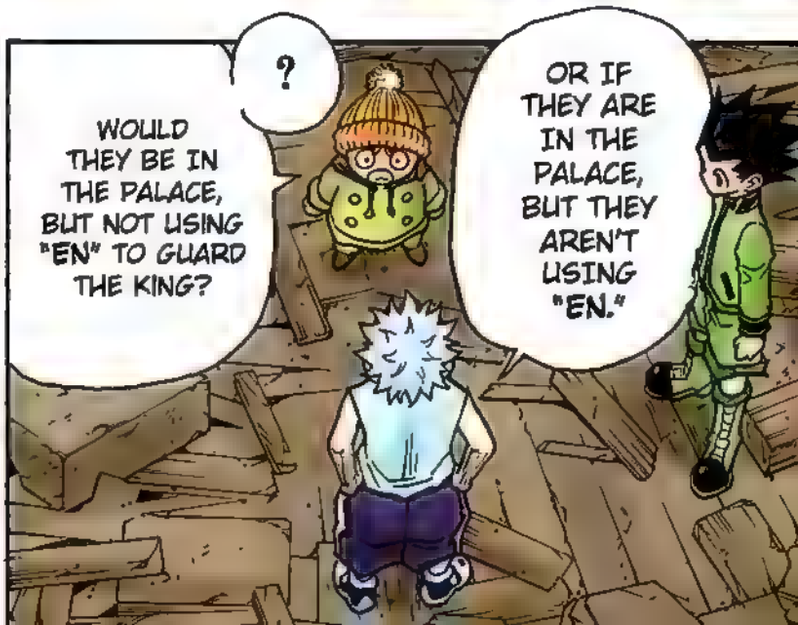

PITOU'S "EN" IS ENOUGH TO COVER THE PALACE AND ITS SURROUNDING COURTYARDS AND THEN SOME.
EVEN IF THEY AREN'T IN THE THRONE ROOM, BUT IF THEY'RE STILL IN THE PALACE, THAT'S FINE.

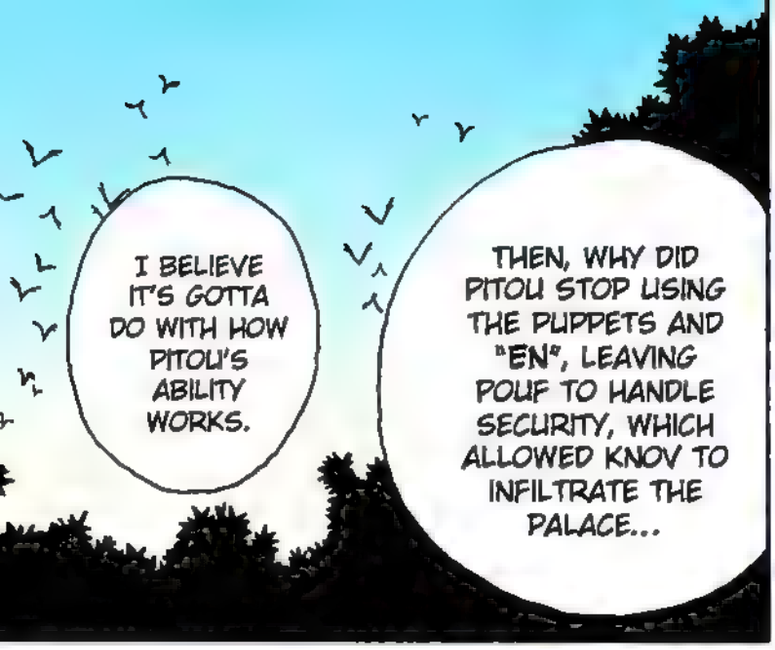
...AND THERE, THEY'LL BE AT THE CENTER!
FROM THERE, WE JUST FOLLOW THAT SINISTER AURA TO WHERE IT FEELS DENSEST...


...WE'LL KNOW THAT THEY'RE INSIDE.
SO, IF WE SENSE THAT CREEPY AURA FROM BEFORE WHEN WE ENTER...

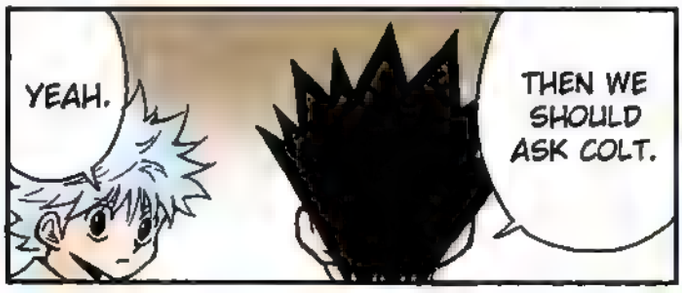

IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT DO WE DO IF THEY AREN'T IN THE PALACE?
THE QUESTION IS WHAT WE DO IF WE DON'T SENSE PITOU'S AURA...

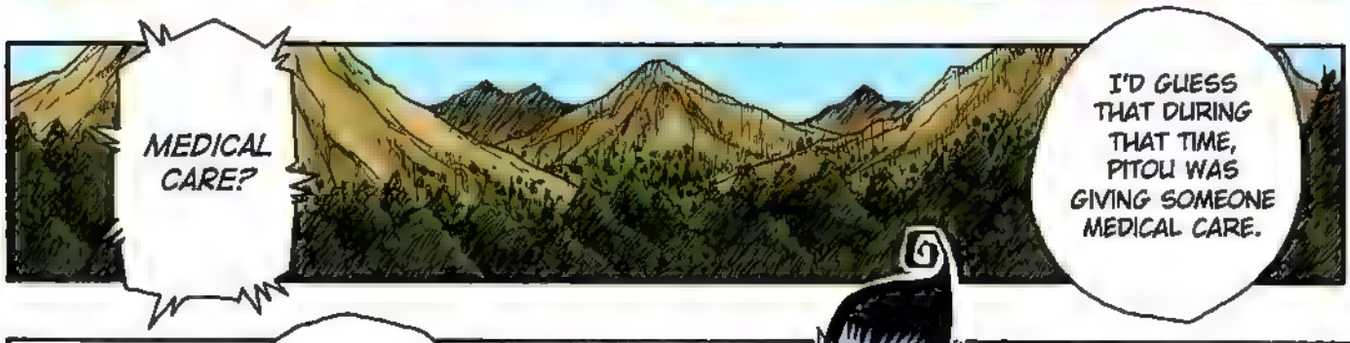

WHEN MR.KNOV INFILTRATED THE PALACE!
IT HAPPENED ONCE.
OH!

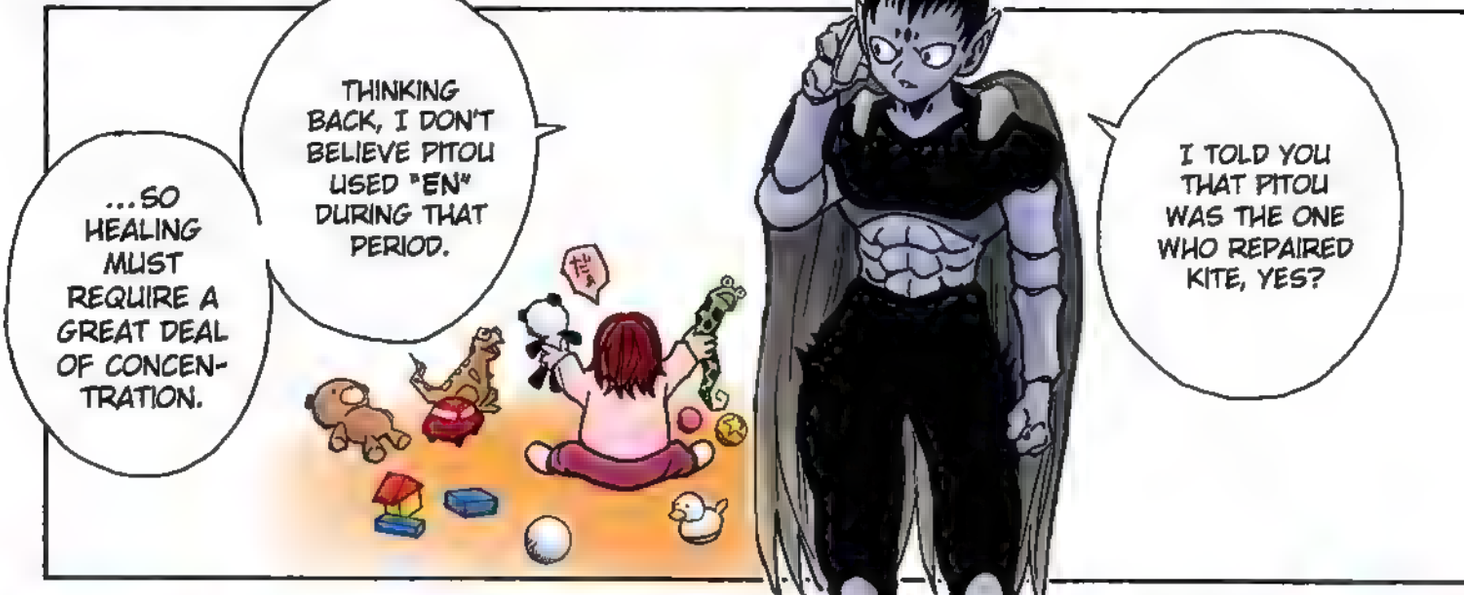

?
WOULD THEY BE IN THE PALACE, BUT NOT USING "EN" TO GUARD THE KING?
OR IF THEY ARE IN THE PALACE, BUT THEY AREN'T USING "EN."

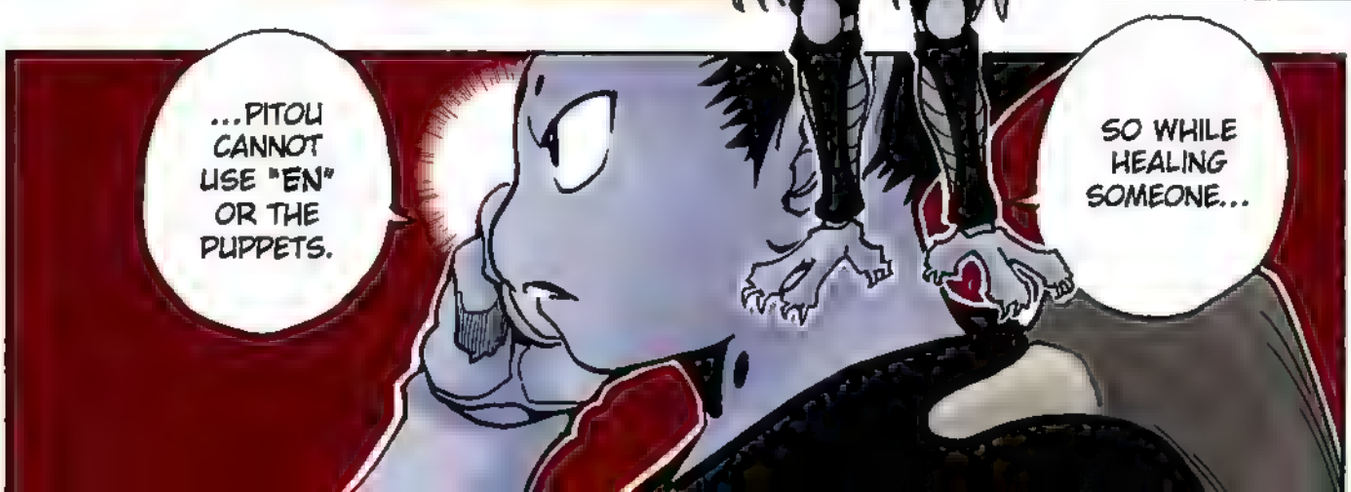

I BELIEVE IT'S GOTTA DO WITH HOW PITOU'S ABILITY WORKS.
THEN, WHY DID PITOU STOP USING THE PUPPETS AND "EN", LEAVING POUF TO HANDLE SECURITY, WHICH ALLOWED KNOV TO INFILTRATE THE PALACE...

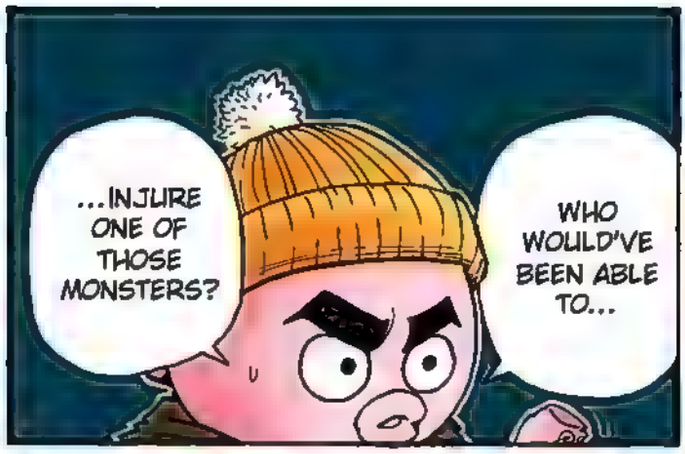
ACCORDING TO COLT, KNOV SAW A GUY CALLED POUF'S AURA.
YES! THAT'S WHAT I CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF.
"THE ROYAL GUARD NEVER LEAVES THE KING'S SIDE." SO IF POUF WAS THERE, SO WERE PITOU AND THE OTHERS WITH THE KING.


YEAH.
THEN WE SHOULD ASK COLT.


MEDICAL CARE?
I'D GUESS THAT DURING THAT TIME, PITOU WAS GIVING SOMEONE MEDICAL CARE.

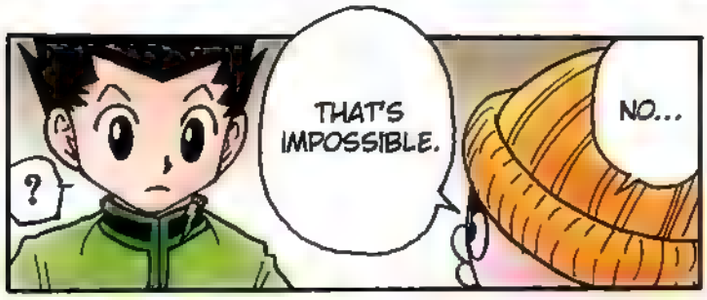

...SO HEALING MUST REQUIRE A GREAT DEAL OF CONCEN-TRATION.
THINKING BACK, I DON'T BELIEVE PITOU USED "EN" DURING THAT PERIOD.
I TOLD YOU THAT PITOU WAS THE ONE WHO REPAIRED KITE, YES?

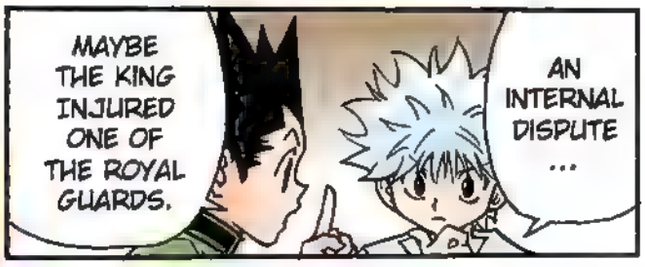

...PITOU CANNOT USE "EN" OR THE PUPPETS.
SO WHILE HEALING SOMEONE...

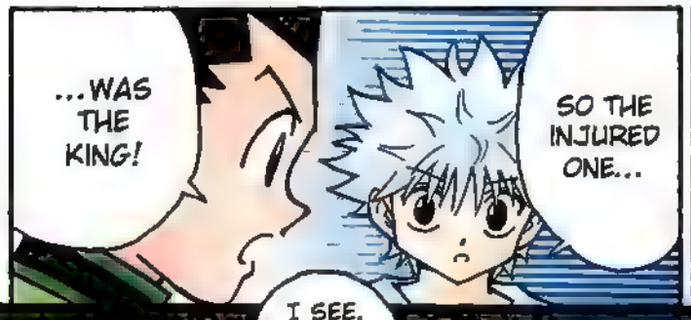

...INJURE ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS?
WHO WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO...

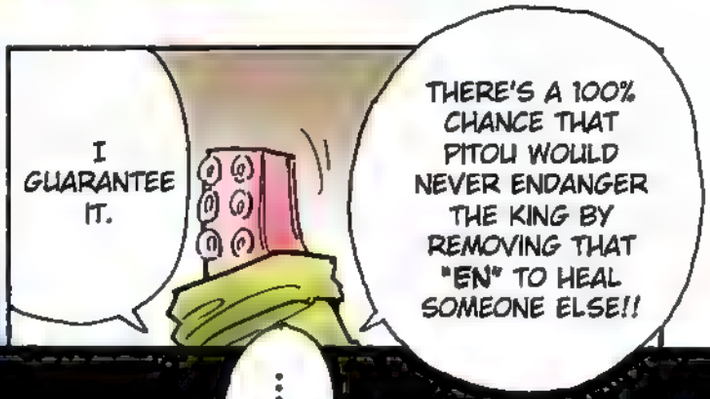
AND REQUIRED HEALING, SO THE "EN" AND THE PUPPETS DISAPPEARED!
NOW IT ALL MAKES SENSE. WHICH MEANS THAT SOMEONE... MOST LIKELY THE KING OR ONE OF THE GUARDS WAS INJURED.
HOLD ON...

TRUE...


?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
NO...


MAYBE THE KING INJURED ONE OF THE ROYAL GUARDS.
AN INTERNAL DISPUTE ...


...WAS THE KING!
SO THE INJURED ONE...


I GUARANTEE IT.
THERE'S A 100% CHANCE THAT PITOU WOULD NEVER ENDANGER THE KING BY REMOVING THAT "EN" TO HEAL SOMEONE ELSE!!

I SEE. WHAT YOU SAY MAKES SENSE.
.....
YEP.
SO OUR CONCLUSION WAS...
THERE'S NO WAY THE ROYAL GUARDS WOULDN'T HARM HIM. BUT THE UNDERLINGS COULD NEVER PUT SO MUCH AS A SCRATCH ON HIM.
BUT THEN, THE BIGGER QUESTION IS "WHO INJURED THE KING?"

INJURED HIMSELF ?!

THE KING...

BUT THAT CHANCE WAS ONLY POSSIBLE UNDER ABNORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES ...!

I'LL ADMIT... THAT I DIDN'T QUESTION OUR SUDDEN STROKE OF LUCK TOO MUCH...

WE DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT'S OUR ONLY EXPLANATION.

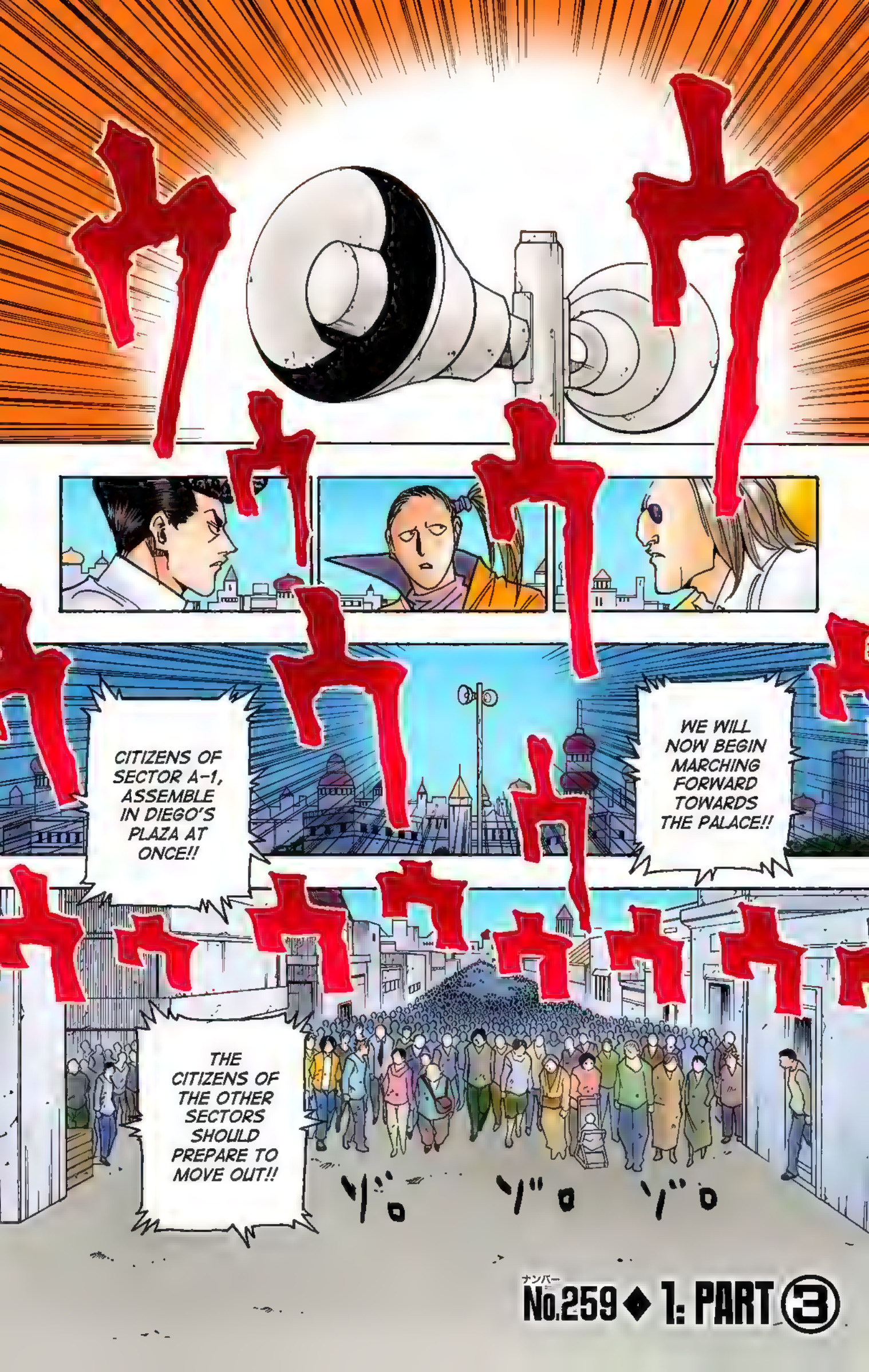
UNDER WHAT CIRCUM-STANCES WOULD THAT HAVE HAPPENED ?!

...CONTROL IN THE PALACE...?

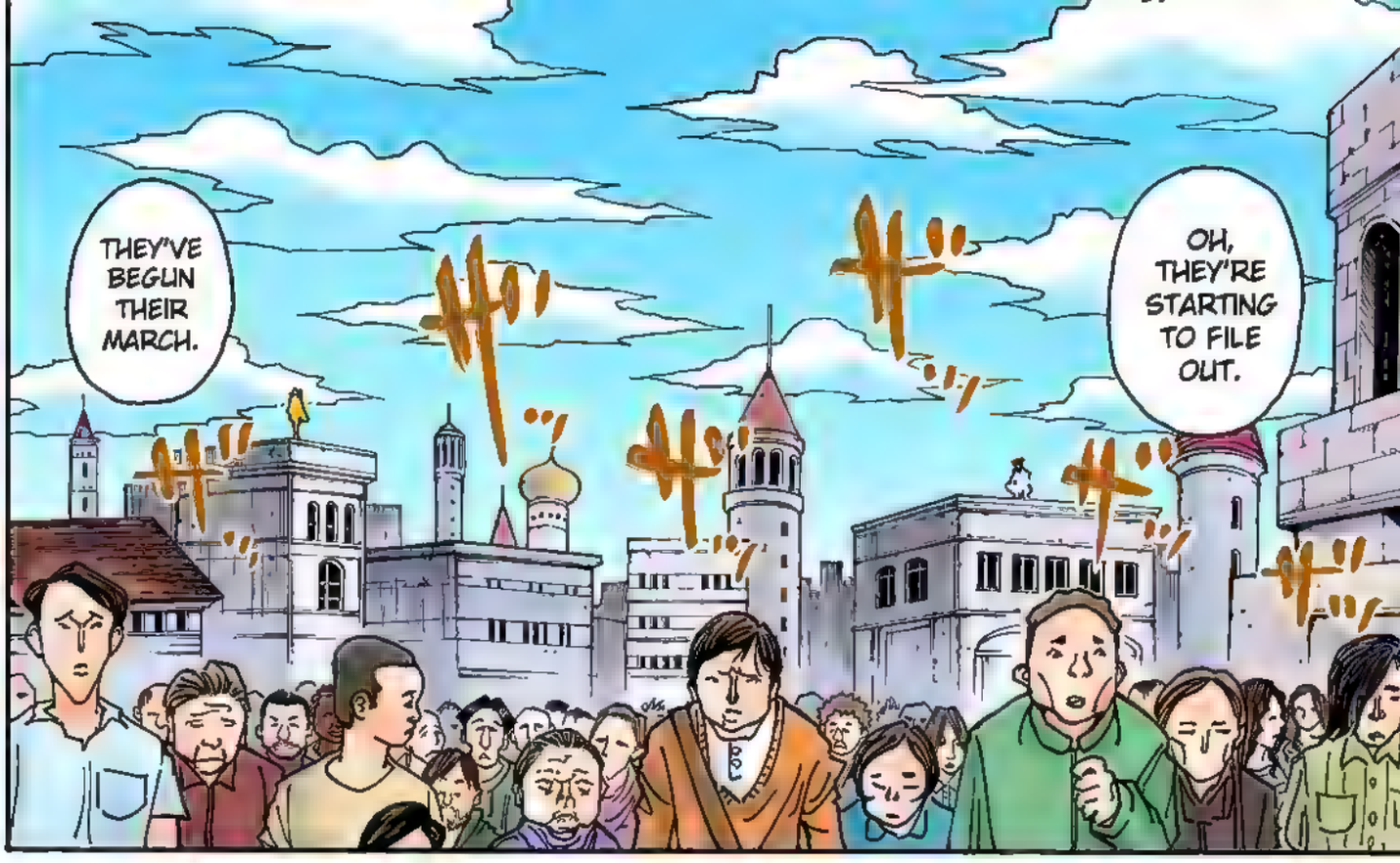
ARE THEY STARTING TO LOSE...

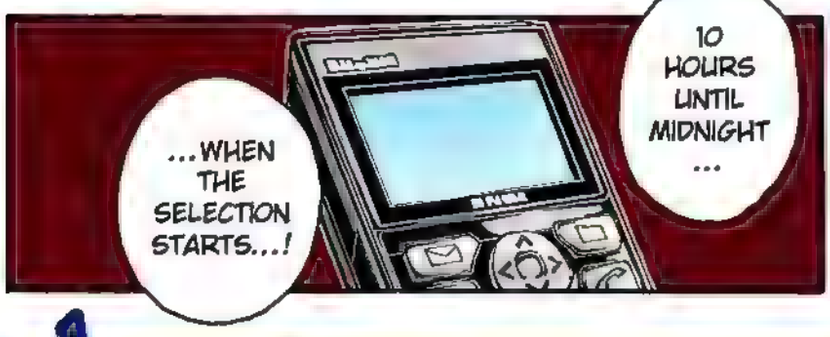
I'M STARTING TO THINK SOMETHING'S GOING TO GO WRONG...

THAT ISN'T GOOD...



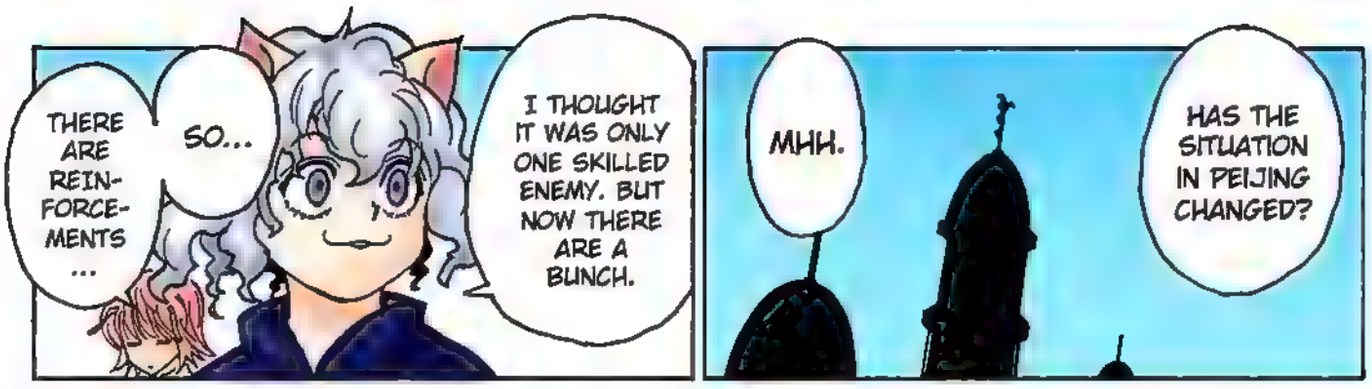
No.259 ◆ 1: PART ③


THEY'VE BEGUN THEIR MARCH.
OH, THEY'RE STARTING TO FILE OUT.

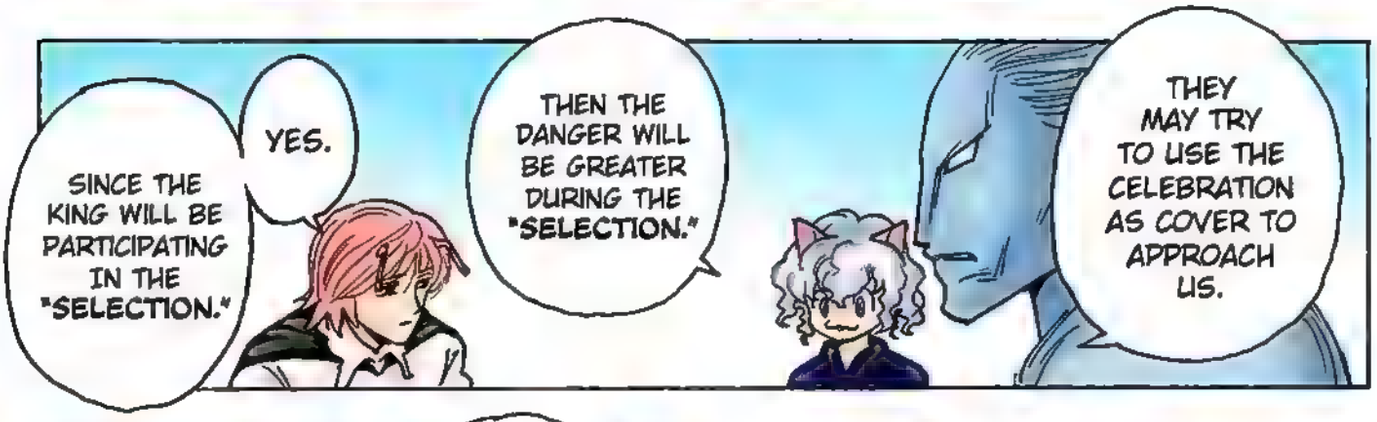

10 HOURS UNTIL MIDNIGHT ...
...WHEN THE SELECTION STARTS...!

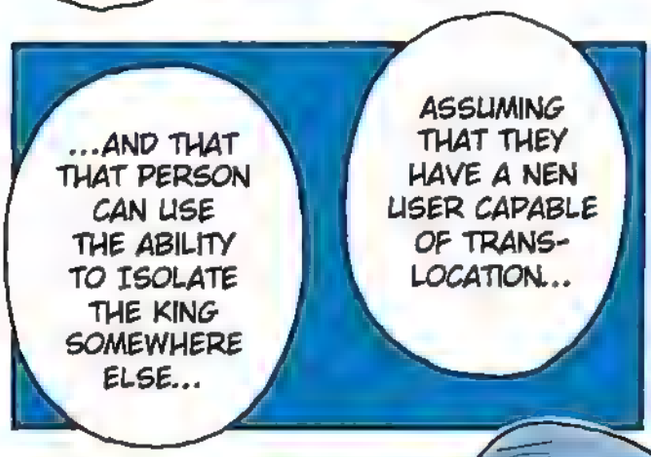
IN 25 HOURS, TOMORROW AFTERNOON ...

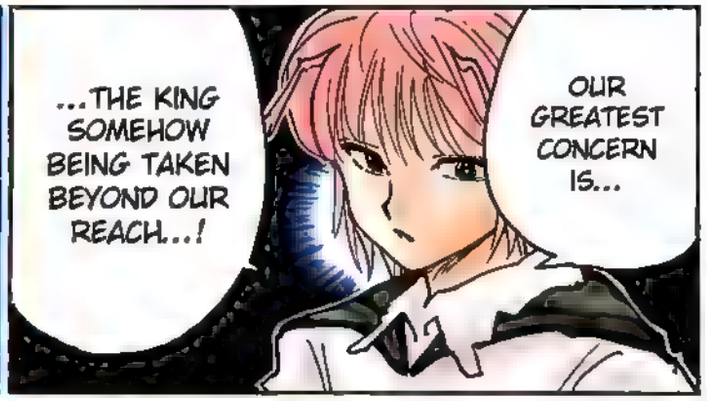
...AT THREE, 5 MILLION HUMANS WILL FILL THE PALACE GROUNDS.

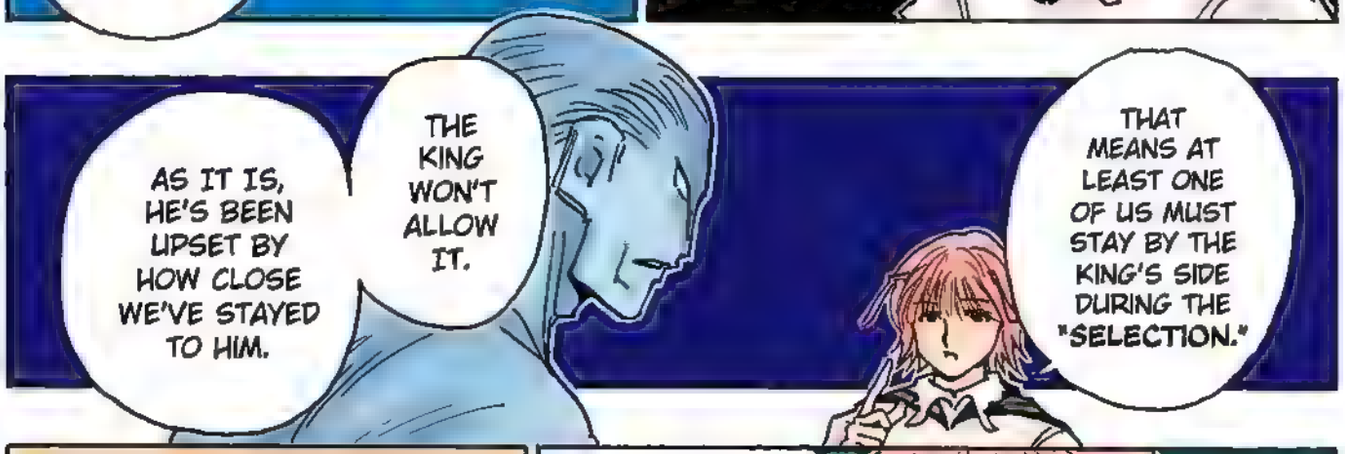

THERE ARE REIN-FORCE-MENTS ...
SO...
I THOUGHT IT WAS ONLY ONE SKILLED ENEMY. BUT NOW THERE ARE A BUNCH.

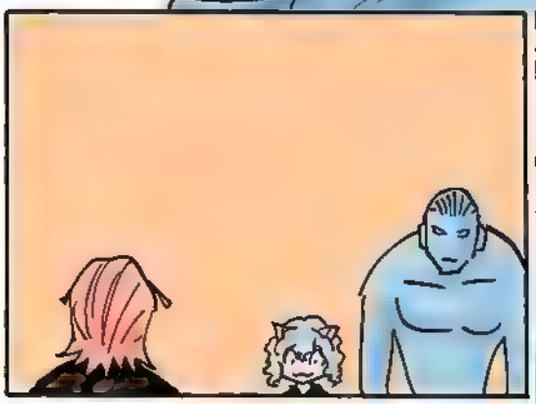
MHH.
HAS THE SITUATION IN PEIJING CHANGED?


SINCE THE KING WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE "SELECTION."
YES.
THEN THE DANGER WILL BE GREATER DURING THE "SELECTION."
THEY MAY TRY TO USE THE CELEBRATION AS COVER TO APPROACH US.

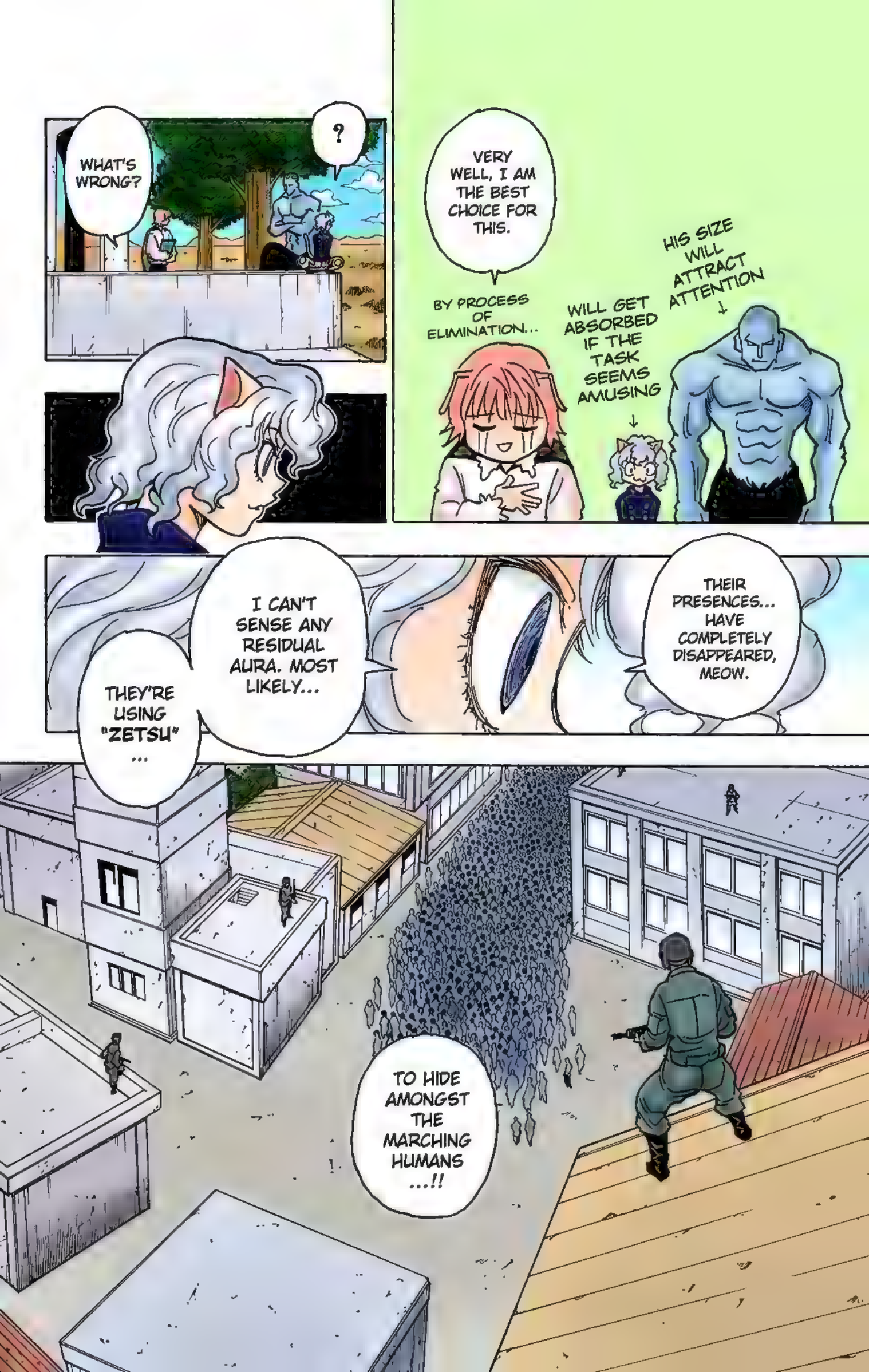

...AND THAT THAT PERSON CAN USE THE ABILITY TO ISOLATE THE KING SOMEWHERE ELSE...
ASSUMING THAT THEY HAVE A NEN USER CAPABLE OF TRANS-LOCATION...


...THE KING SOMEHOW BEING TAKEN BEYOND OUR REACH...!
OUR GREATEST CONCERN IS...

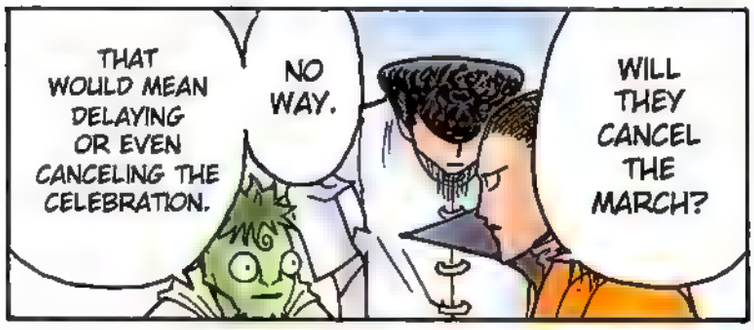

AS IT IS, HE'S BEEN UPSET BY HOW CLOSE WE'VE STAYED TO HIM.
THE KING WON'T ALLOW IT.
THAT MEANS AT LEAST ONE OF US MUST STAY BY THE KING'S SIDE DURING THE "SELECTION."

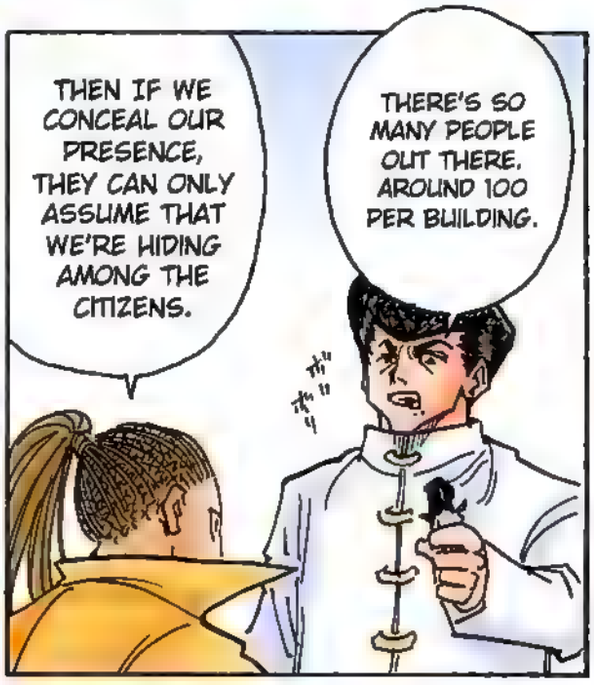


WE NEED SOMEONE TO STAY JUST CLOSE ENOUGH TO MONITOR HIS SURROUNDINGS WHILE STILL CARRYING OUT HIS OWN ROLE IN THE SELECTION...
THEN WE GUARD HIM SECRETLY, WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE.


WHAT'S WRONG?
?
VERY WELL, I AM THE BEST CHOICE FOR THIS.
BY PROCESS OF ELIMINATION...
WILL GET ABSORBED IF THE TASK SEEMS AMUSING
HIS SIZE WILL ATTRACT ATTENTION
THEY'RE USING "ZETSU" ...
I CAN'T SENSE ANY RESIDUAL AURA. MOST LIKELY...
THEIR PRESENCES... HAVE COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED, MEOW.
TO HIDE AMONGST THE MARCHING HUMANS ...!!

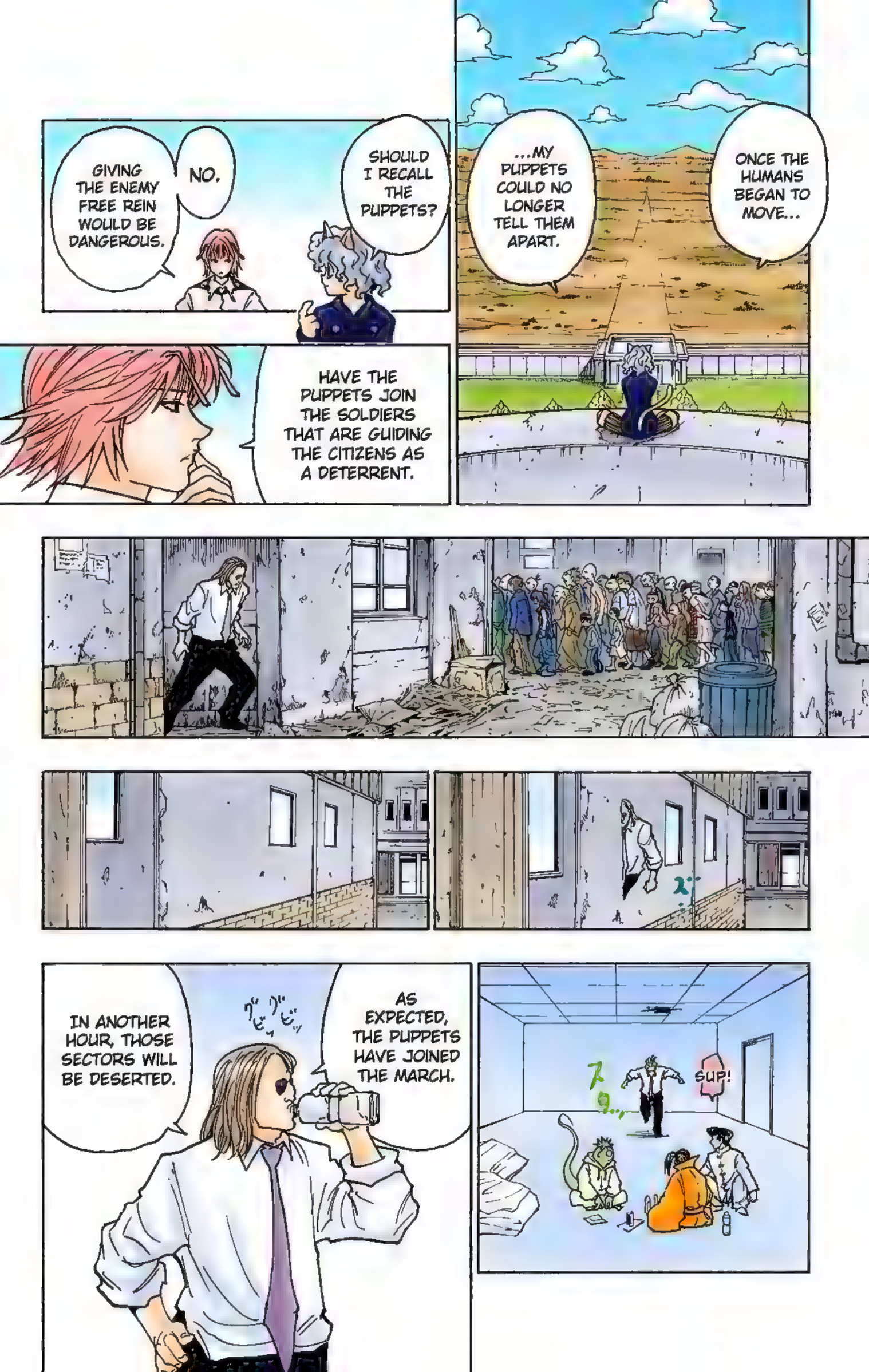
HEY THERE.

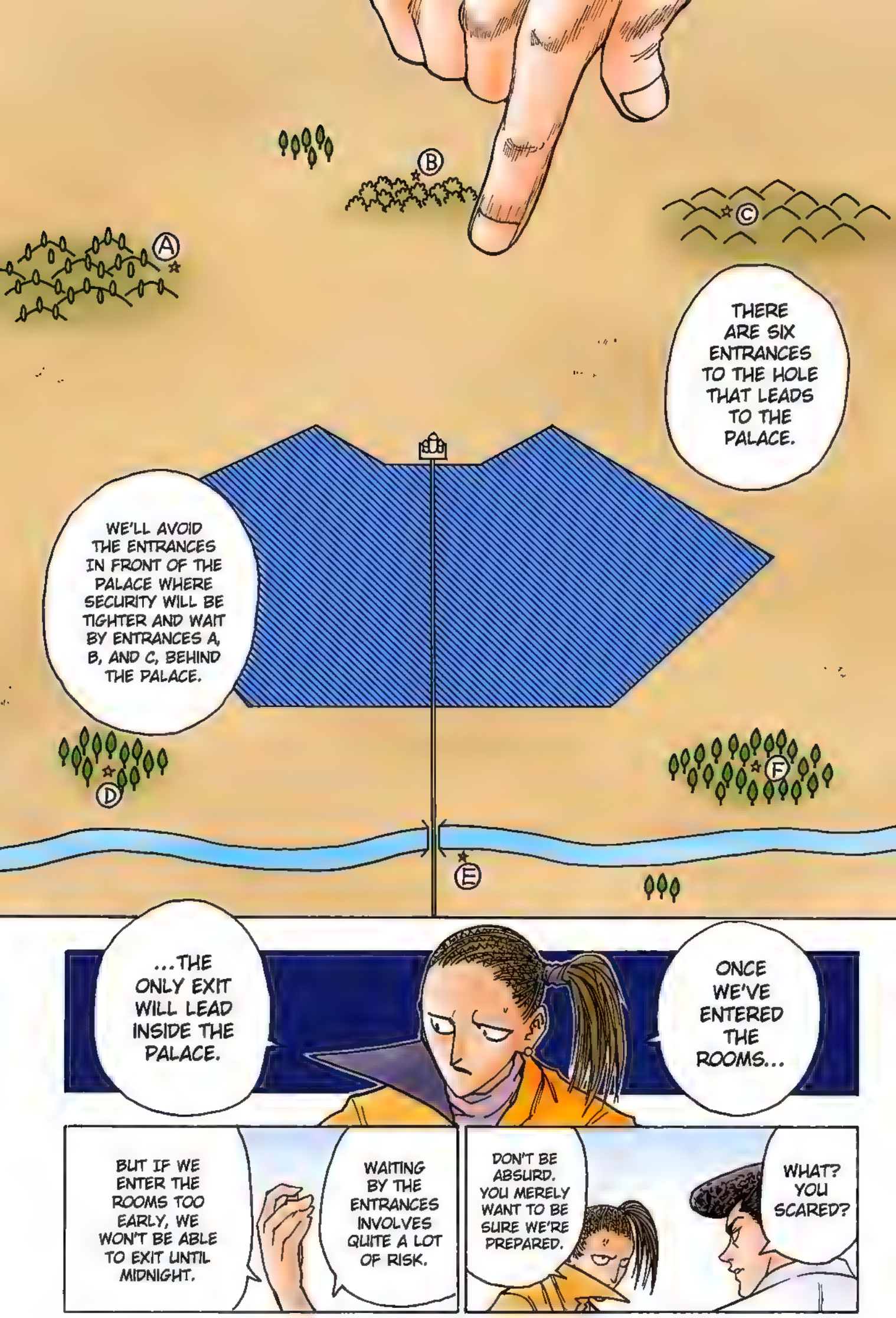

THAT WOULD MEAN DELAYING OR EVEN CANCELING THE CELEBRATION.
NO WAY.
WILL THEY CANCEL THE MARCH?

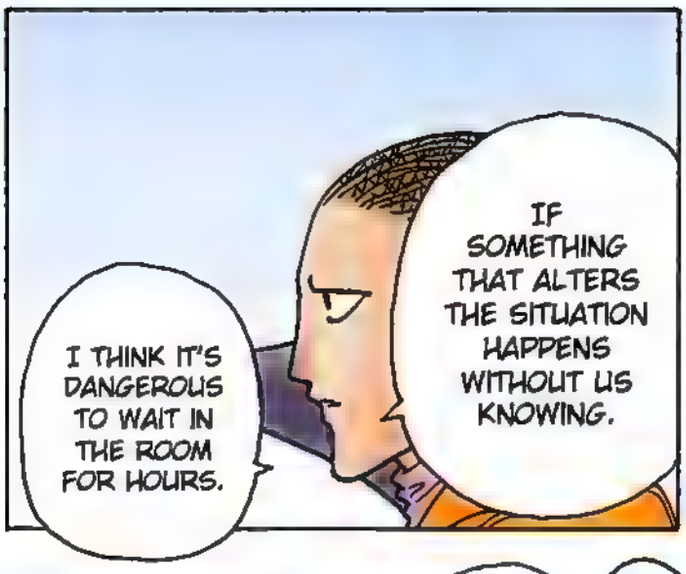

THEN IF WE CONCEAL OUR PRESENCE, THEY CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT WE'RE HIDING AMONG THE CITIZENS.
THERE'S SO MANY PEOPLE OUT THERE. AROUND 100 PER BUILDING.

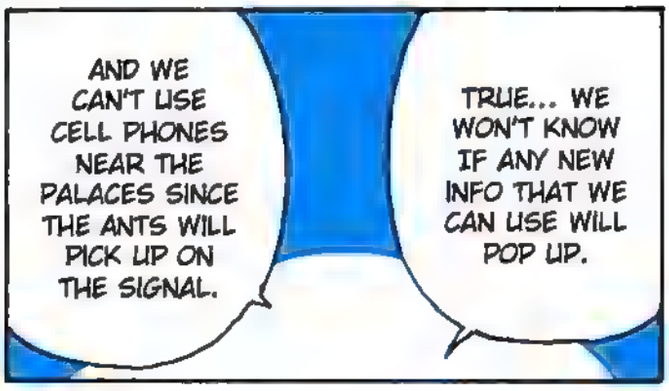
THE ROYAL GUARD WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
WHICH MEANS THE KING HAD ACCEPTED DEFEAT AND COMPROMISED.

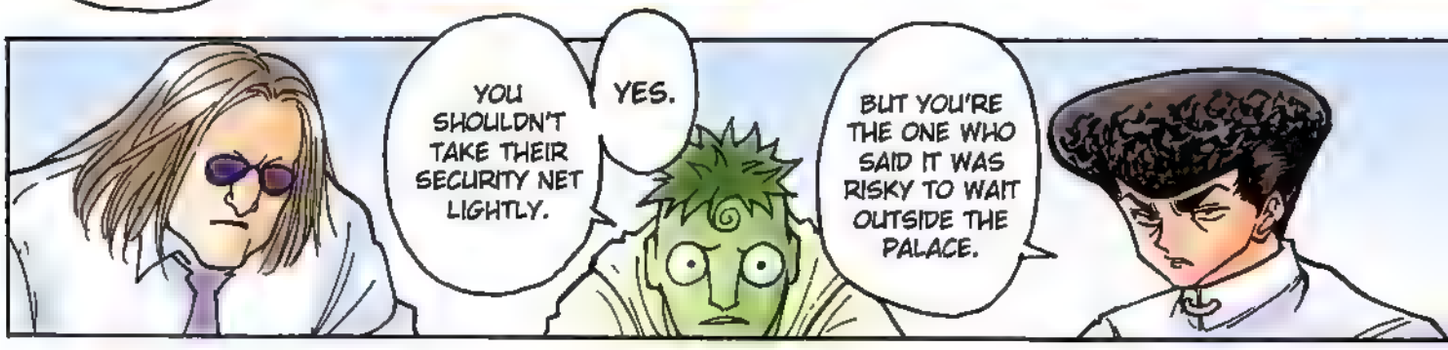
TOMORROW AT 3PM!! AND THAT WON'T CHANGE THE FACTS!!
THE CELEBRATION WILL BEGIN AS SCHEDULED, NO MATTER THE COST!


SHOULD I RECALL THE PUPPETS?
NO.
GIVING THE ENEMY FREE REIN WOULD BE DANGEROUS.
HAVE THE PUPPETS JOIN THE SOLDIERS THAT ARE GUIDING THE CITIZENS AS A DETERRENT.
ONCE THE HUMANS BEGAN TO MOVE...
...MY PUPPETS COULD NO LONGER TELL THEM APART.
AS EXPECTED, THE PUPPETS HAVE JOINED THE MARCH.
IN ANOTHER HOUR, THOSE SECTORS WILL BE DESERTED.
SUP!


A
B
C
THERE ARE SIX ENTRANCES TO THE HOLE THAT LEADS TO THE PALACE.
WE'LL AVOID THE ENTRANCES IN FRONT OF THE PALACE WHERE SECURITY WILL BE TIGHTER AND WAIT BY ENTRANCES A, B, AND C, BEHIND THE PALACE.
D
E
F
...THE ONLY EXIT WILL LEAD INSIDE THE PALACE.
ONCE WE'VE ENTERED THE ROOMS...
BUT IF WE ENTER THE ROOMS TOO EARLY, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO EXIT UNTIL MIDNIGHT.
WAITING BY THE ENTRANCES INVOLVES QUITE A LOT OF RISK.
DON'T BE ABSURD. YOU MERELY WANT TO BE SURE WE'RE PREPARED.
WHAT? YOU SCARED?

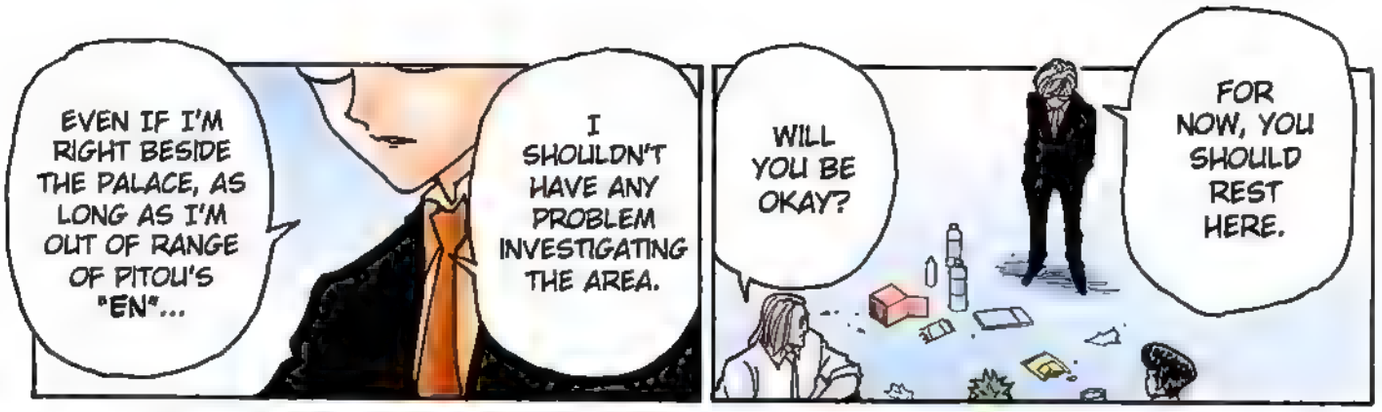

I THINK IT'S DANGEROUS TO WAIT IN THE ROOM FOR HOURS.
IF SOMETHING THAT ALTERS THE SITUATION HAPPENS WITHOUT US KNOWING.

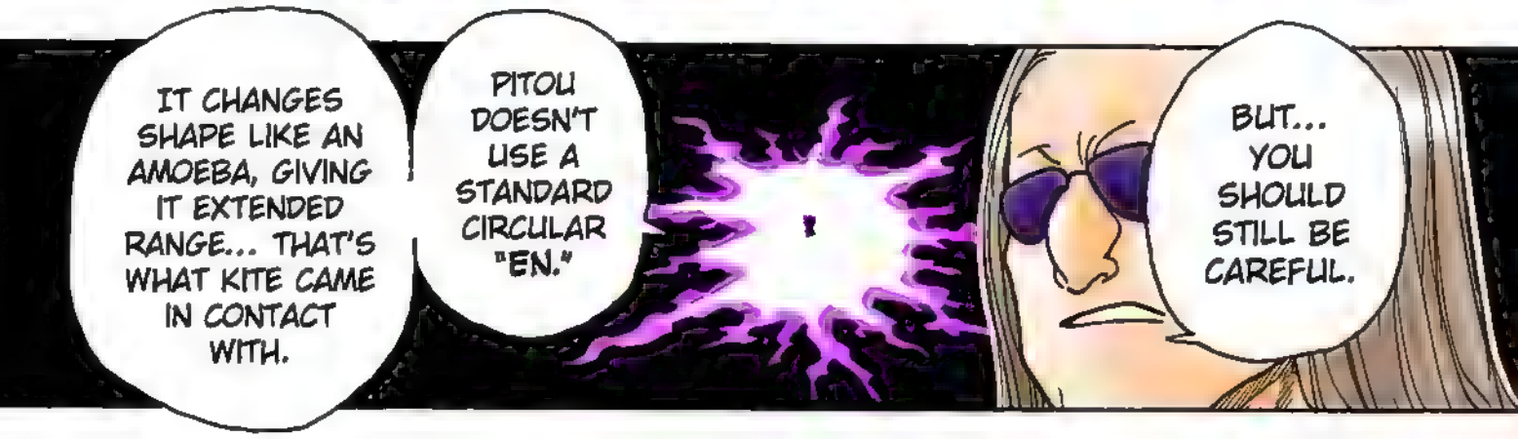

AND WE CAN'T USE CELL PHONES NEAR THE PALACES SINCE THE ANTS WILL PICK UP ON THE SIGNAL.
TRUE... WE WON'T KNOW IF ANY NEW INFO THAT WE CAN USE WILL POP UP.

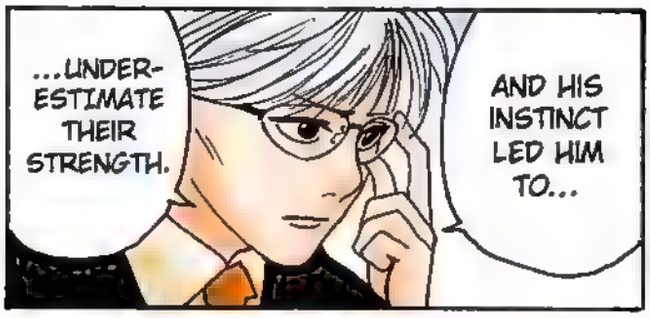

YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE THEIR SECURITY NET LIGHTLY.
YES.
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID IT WAS RISKY TO WAIT OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

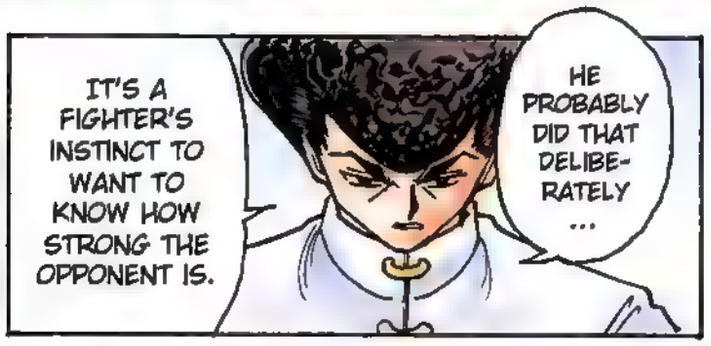
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

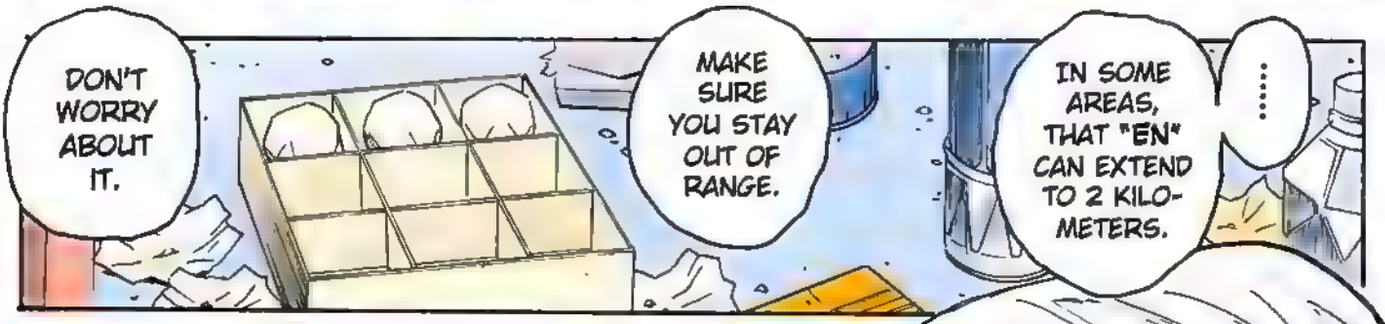
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FREELY ENTER AND EXIT THESE ROOMS...


EVEN IF I'M RIGHT BESIDE THE PALACE, AS LONG AS I'M OUT OF RANGE OF PITOU'S "EN"...
I SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM INVESTIGATING THE AREA.
WILL YOU BE OKAY?
FOR NOW, YOU SHOULD REST HERE.


IT CHANGES SHAPE LIKE AN AMOEBA, GIVING IT EXTENDED RANGE... THAT'S WHAT KITE CAME IN CONTACT WITH.
PITOU DOESN'T USE A STANDARD CIRCULAR "EN."
BUT... YOU SHOULD STILL BE CAREFUL.


...UNDER-ESTIMATE THEIR STRENGTH.
AND HIS INSTINCT LED HIM TO...


IT'S A FIGHTER'S INSTINCT TO WANT TO KNOW HOW STRONG THE OPPONENT IS.
HE PROBABLY DID THAT DELIBE-RATELY ...


DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
MAKE SURE YOU STAY OUT OF RANGE.
IN SOME AREAS, THAT "EN" CAN EXTEND TO 2 KILO-METERS.
.....

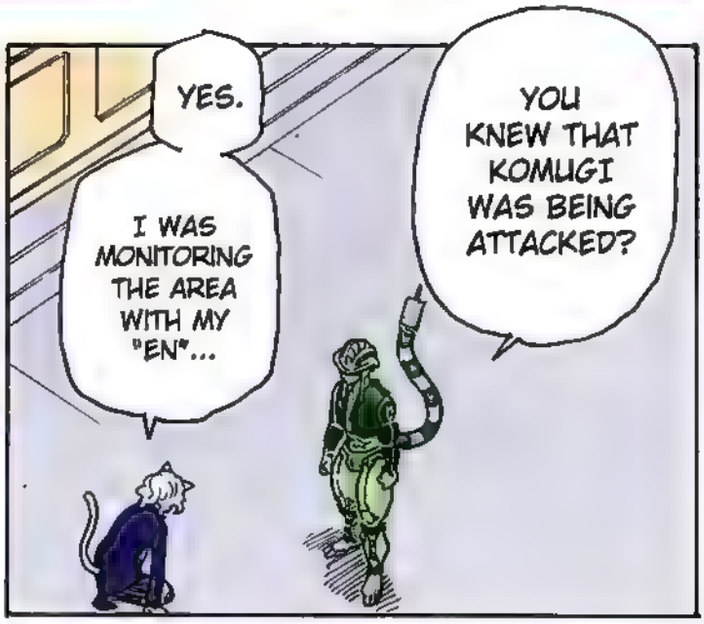
I PROMISE YOU THAT.

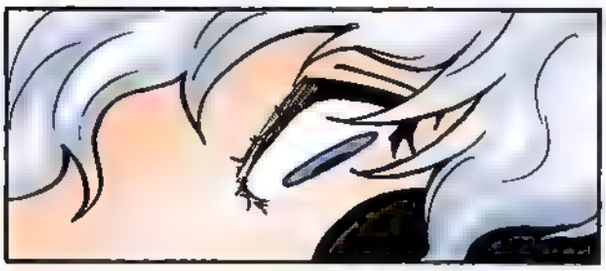
I WON'T DO ANYTHING CRAZY.
I FEAR THEM MORE THAN ANYONE HERE IN THIS ROOM.

ANY PERSON WHO LEAVES THEIR LINE WILL BE SHOT ON SIGHT!!
WE WILL NOW HEAD TO THE PALACE!!
MOVE OUT!!

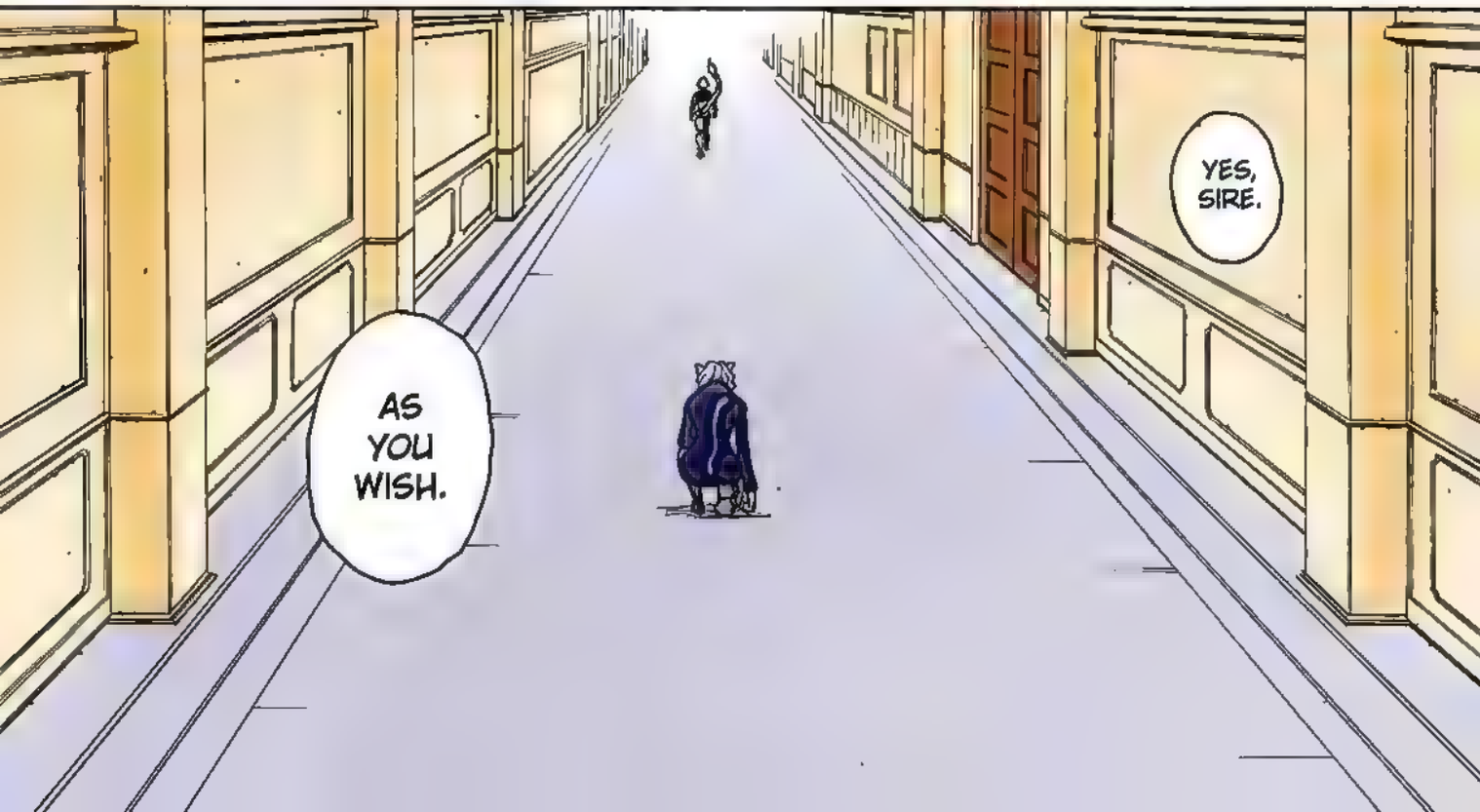
YES!
PITOU!

SO I IGNORED IT.
HOWEVER, I DETERMINED THAT THERE WAS NO THREAT TO YOUR MAJESTY.

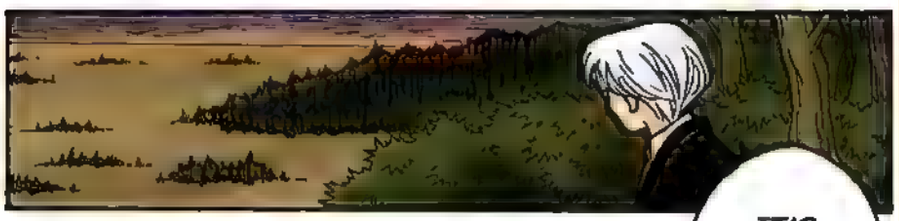

YES.
I WAS MONITORING THE AREA WITH MY "EN"...
YOU KNEW THAT KOMUGI WAS BEING ATTACKED?

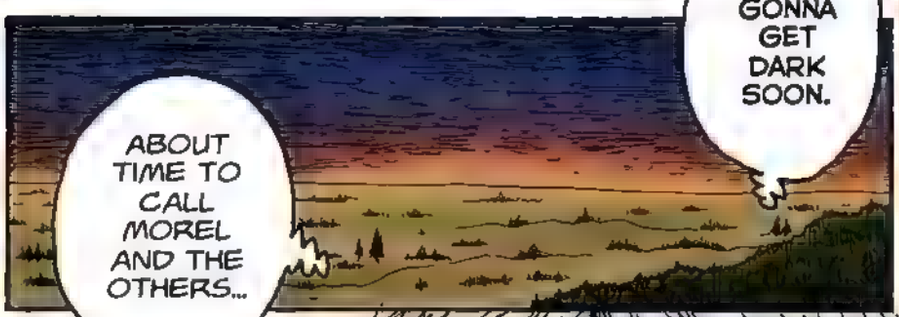


...AND DEAL WITH ANY THREATS AT ONCE.
FROM NOW ON, MONITOR KOMUGI'S SURROUNDINGS...


YES, SIRE.
AS YOU WISH.

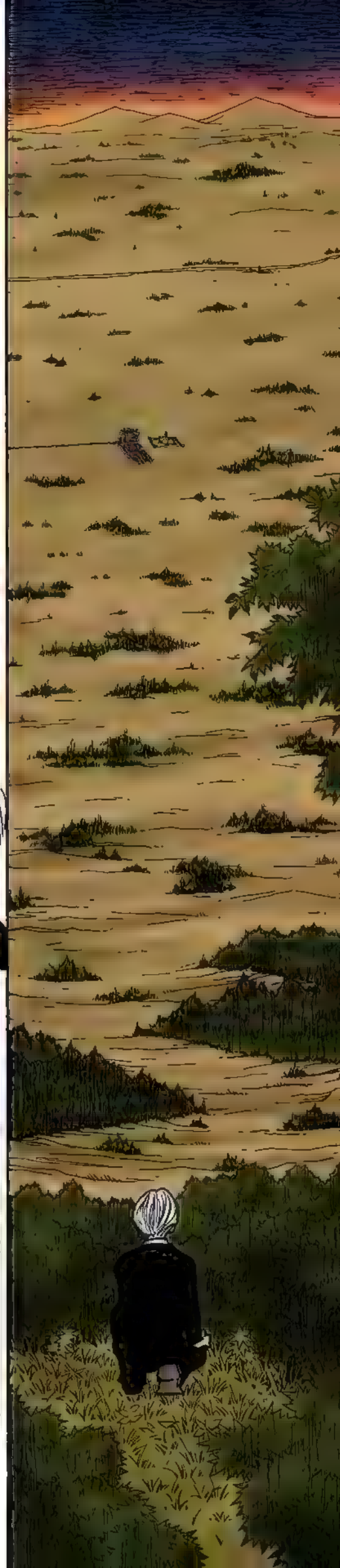
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE MARCHING IN A LINE TOWARD THE KING.
JUST LIKE ANTS... NO, LEMMINGS. A MARCH OF DEATH.



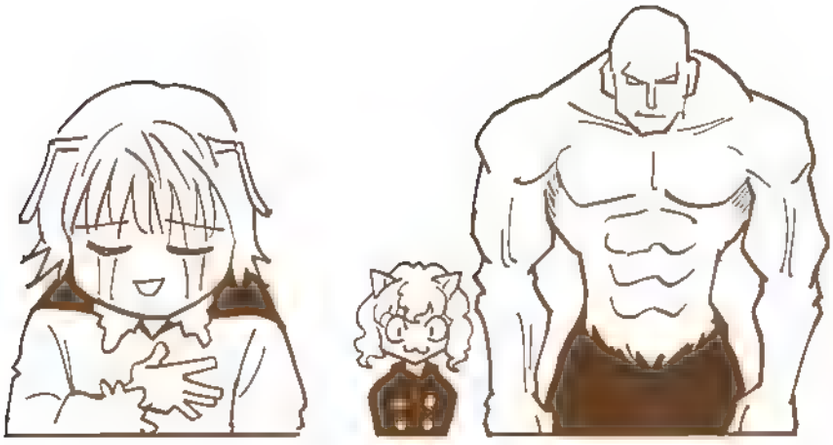

IT'S GONNA GET DARK SOON.
ABOUT TIME TO CALL MOREL AND THE OTHERS...

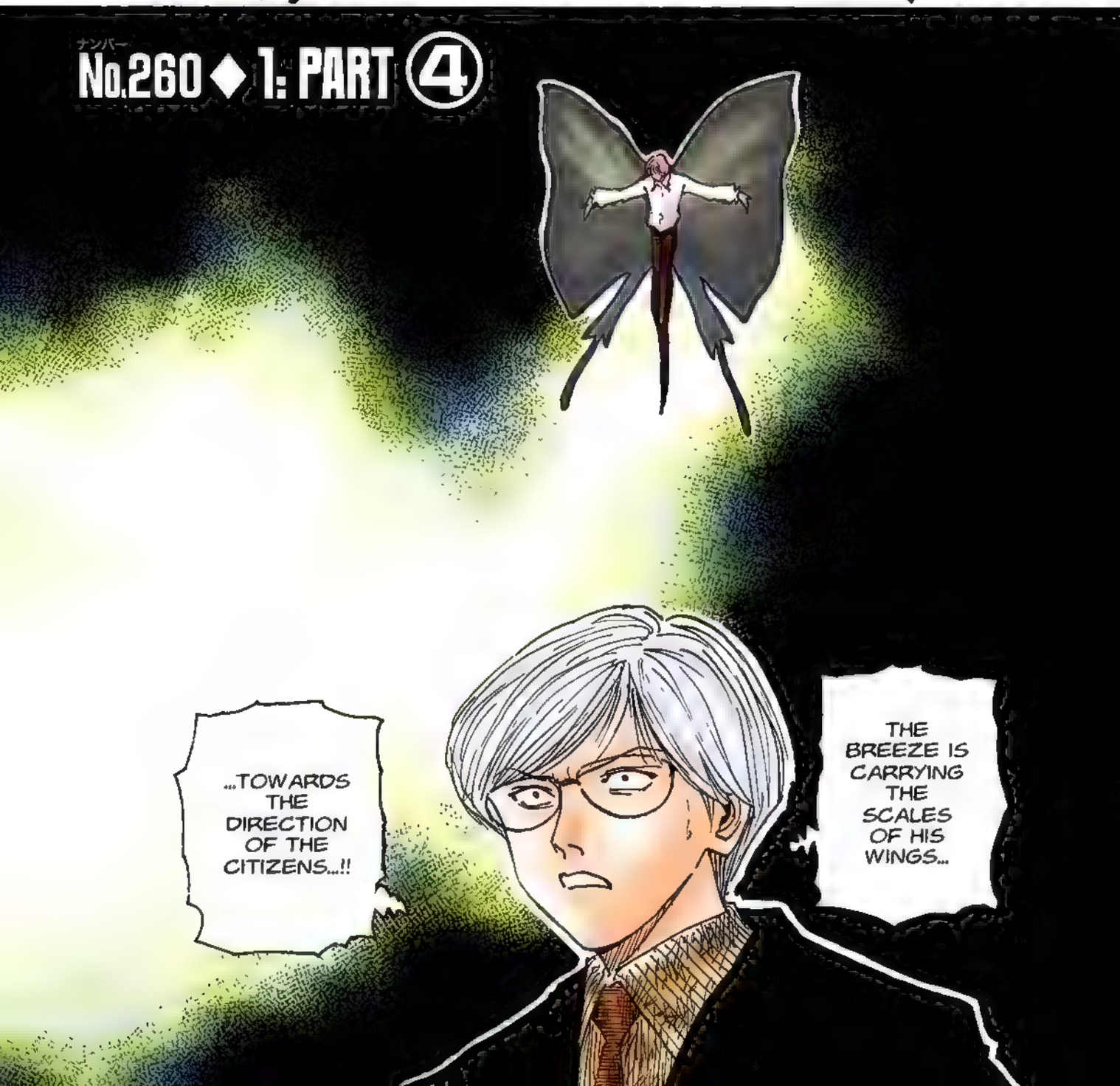
?

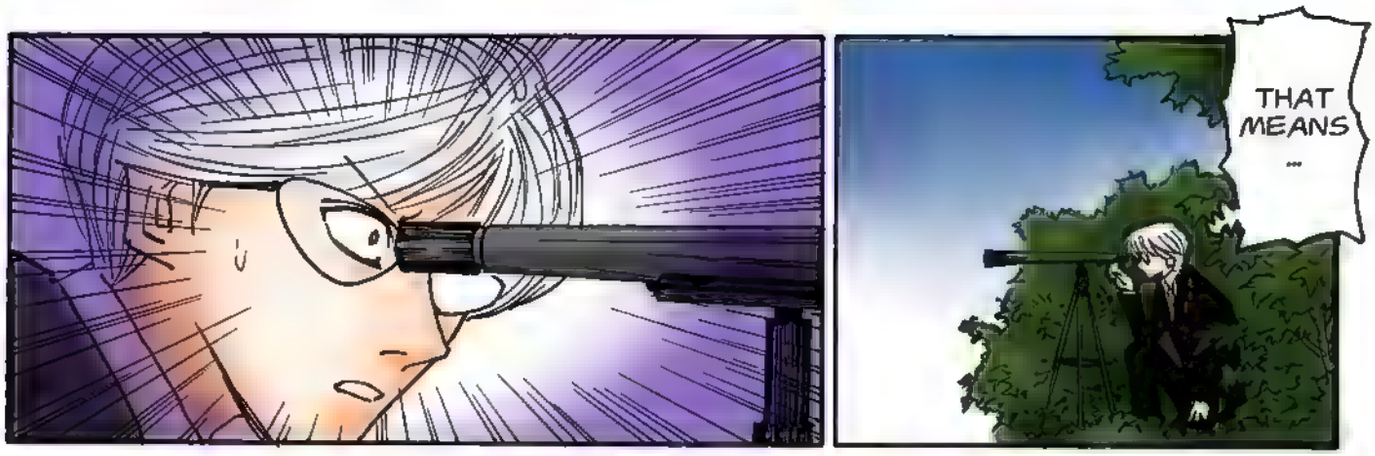
...IS THAT...?!
WHAT...



!!
WING SCALES ?!!

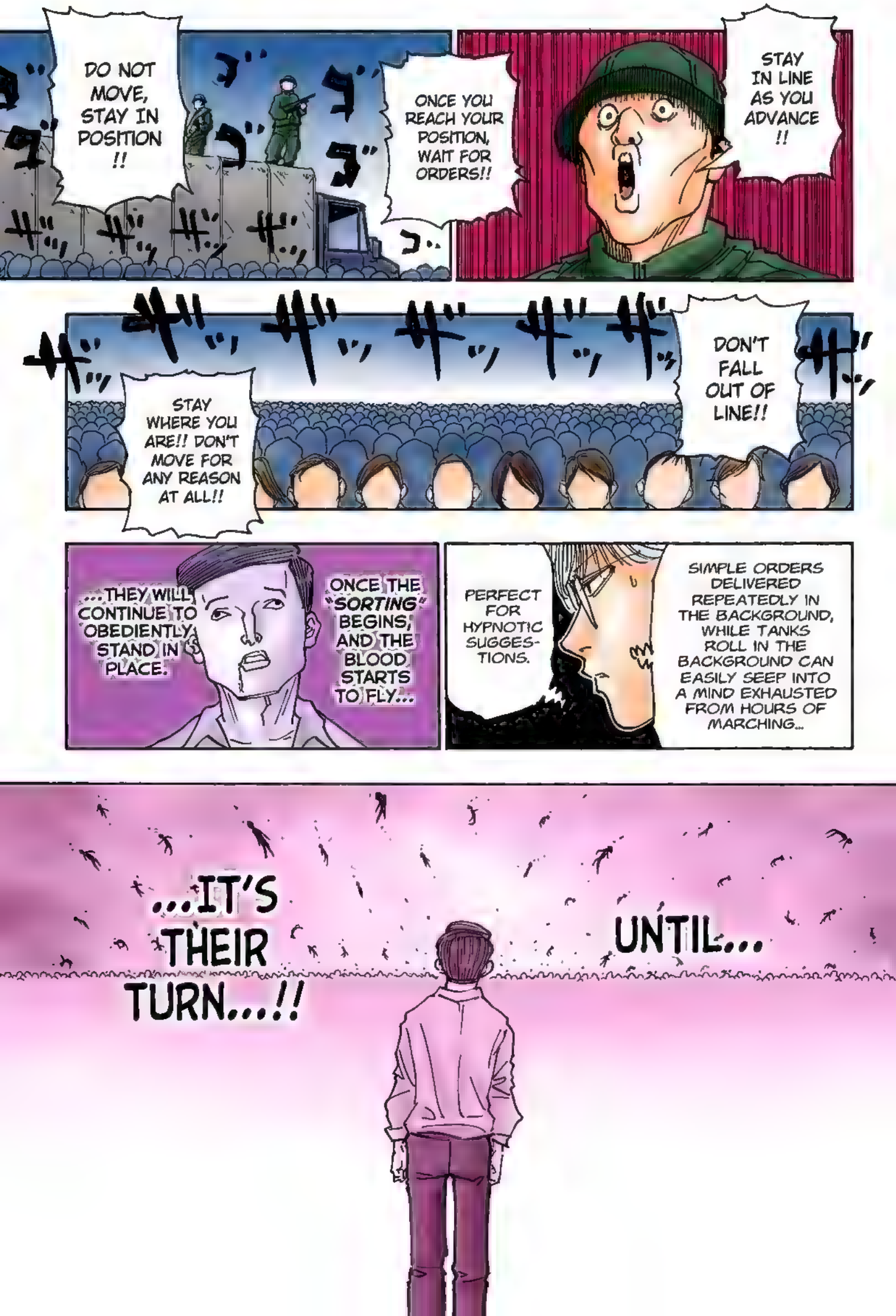


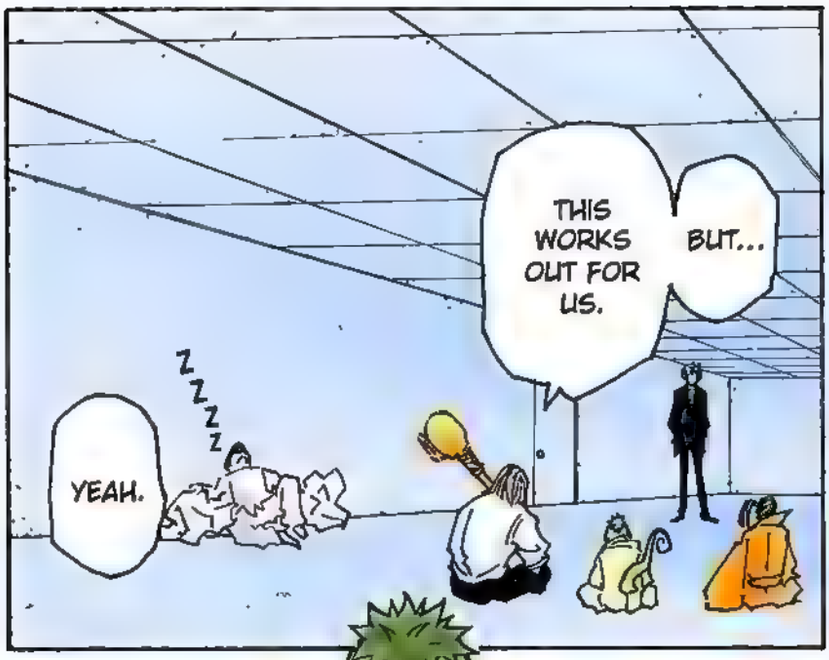

No.260 ◆ 1: PART ④
...TOWARDS THE DIRECTION OF THE CITIZENS...!!
THE BREEZE IS CARRYING THE SCALES OF HIS WINGS...



THEY ALL LOOK COMPLETELY VACANT AND DAZED...!!

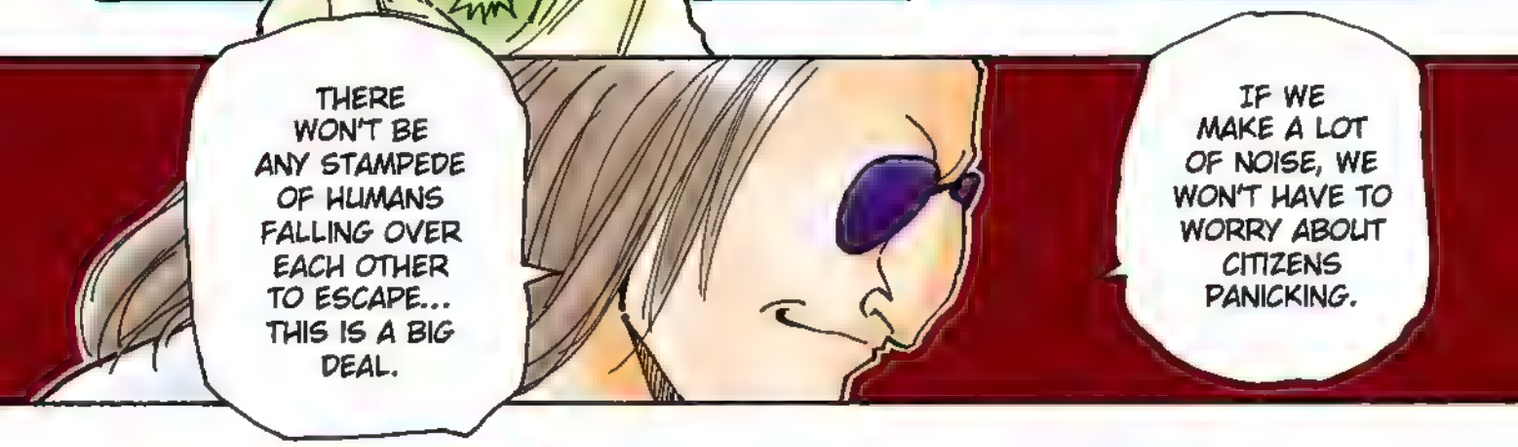
THOSE SCALES HAVE A HYPNOTIC EFFECT!


DO NOT MOVE, STAY IN POSITION !!
ONCE YOU REACH YOUR POSITION, WAIT FOR ORDERS!!
STAY IN LINE AS YOU ADVANCE !!
STAY WHERE YOU ARE!! DON'T MOVE FOR ANY REASON AT ALL!!
DON'T FALL OUT OF LINE!!
...THEY WILL CONTINUE TO OBEDIENTLY STAND IN PLACE.
ONCE THE "SORTING" BEGINS, AND THE BLOOD STARTS TO FLY...
PERFECT FOR HYPNOTIC SUGGES-TIONS.
SIMPLE ORDERS DELIVERED REPEATEDLY IN THE BACKGROUND, WHILE TANKS ROLL IN THE BACKGROUND CAN EASILY SEEP INTO A MIND EXHAUSTED FROM HOURS OF MARCHING...
...IT'S THEIR TURN...!!
UNTIL...


THIS WORKS OUT FOR US.
BUT...
YEAH.

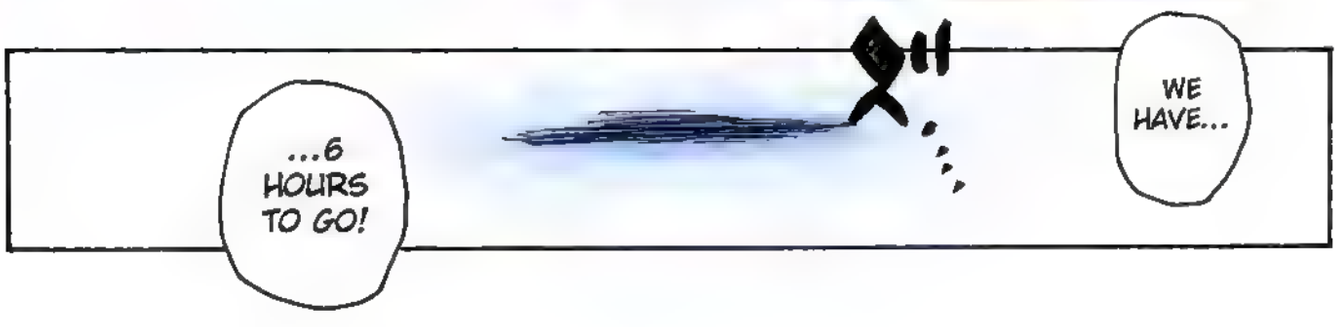
IF THEY'RE HYPNOTIZED, THE CITIZENS WON'T RUN.
HYPNOSIS... I SEE.

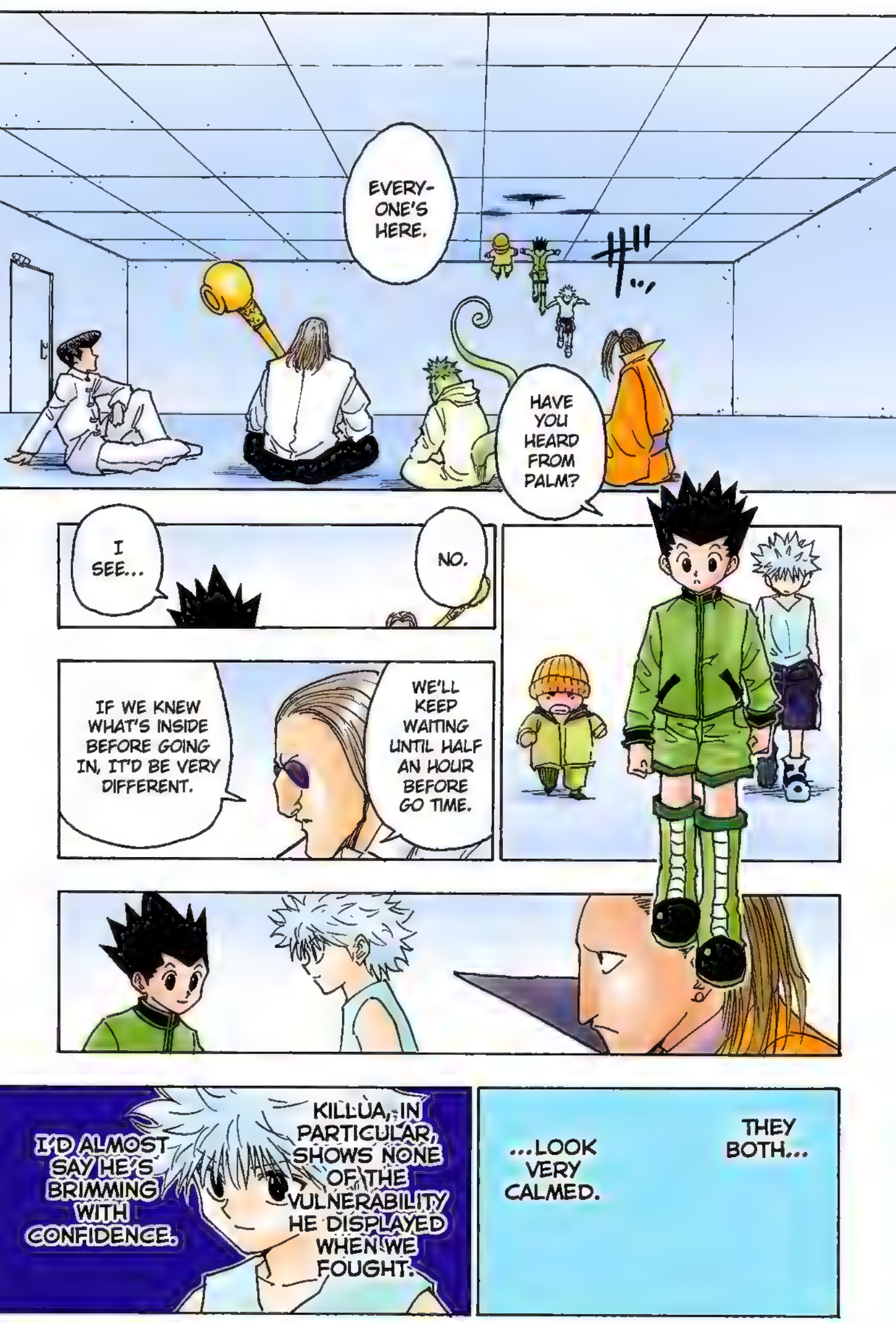
?

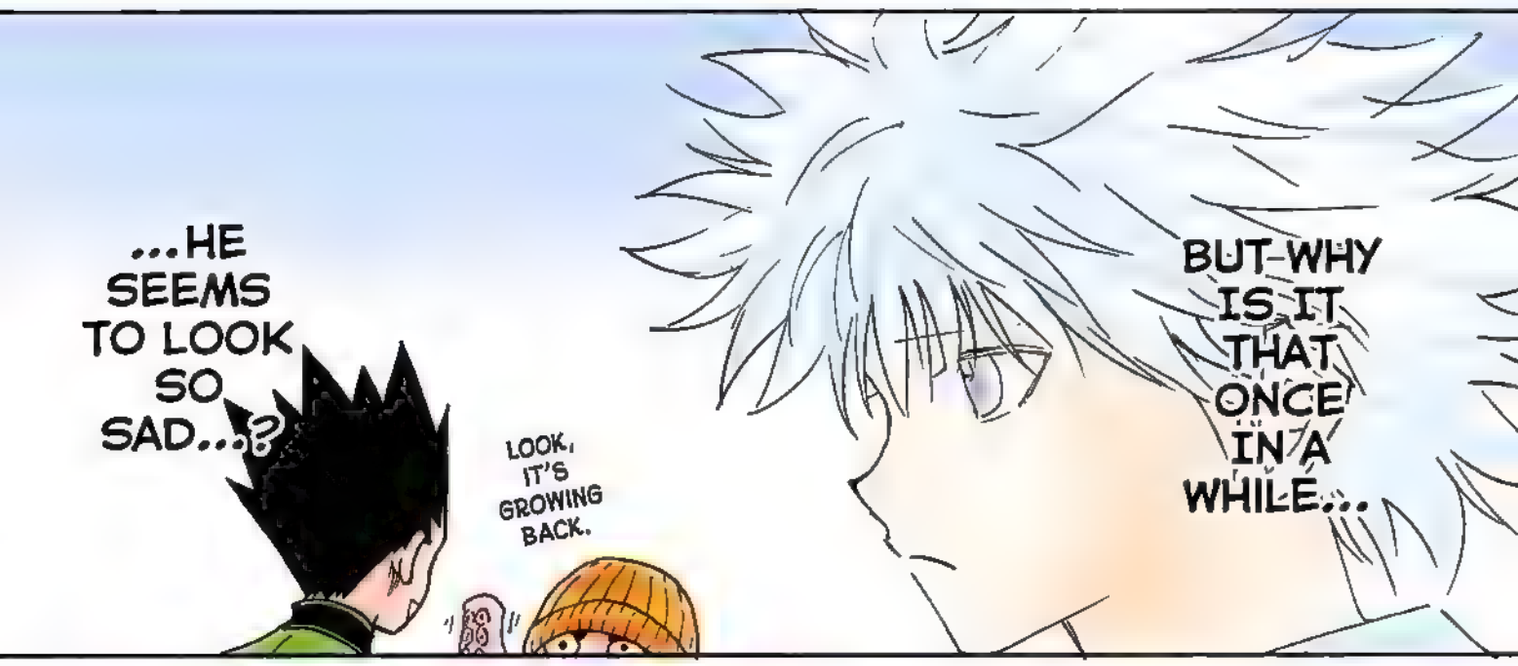

THERE WON'T BE ANY STAMPEDE OF HUMANS FALLING OVER EACH OTHER TO ESCAPE... THIS IS A BIG DEAL.
IF WE MAKE A LOT OF NOISE, WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CITIZENS PANICKING.

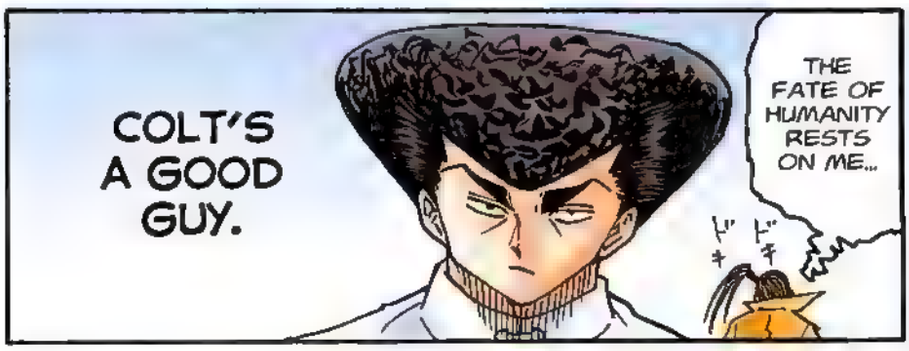
WE CAN FIGHT TO OUR HEART'S CONTENT.
OUR BIGGEST CONCERN HAS BEEN ADDRESSED.

...WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED A STAMPEDE TO LEAVE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CASUALTIES.
ASSUMING THAT OVER HALF OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE IN PLACE AT MIDNIGHT...
むっ


...6 HOURS TO GO!
WE HAVE...


EVERY-ONE'S HERE.
HAVE YOU HEARD FROM PALM?
I SEE...
NO.
IF WE KNEW WHAT'S INSIDE BEFORE GOING IN, IT'D BE VERY DIFFERENT.
WE'LL KEEP WAITING UNTIL HALF AN HOUR BEFORE GO TIME.
I'D ALMOST SAY HE'S BRIMMING WITH CONFIDENCE.
KILLUA, IN PARTICULAR, SHOWS NONE OF THE VULNERABILITY HE DISPLAYED WHEN WE FOUGHT.
...LOOK VERY CALMED.
THEY BOTH...


...HE SEEMS TO LOOK SO SAD...?
LOOK, IT'S GROWING BACK.
BUT-WHY IS IT THAT ONCE IN A WHILE...


COLT'S A GOOD GUY.
THE FATE OF HUMANITY RESTS ON ME...
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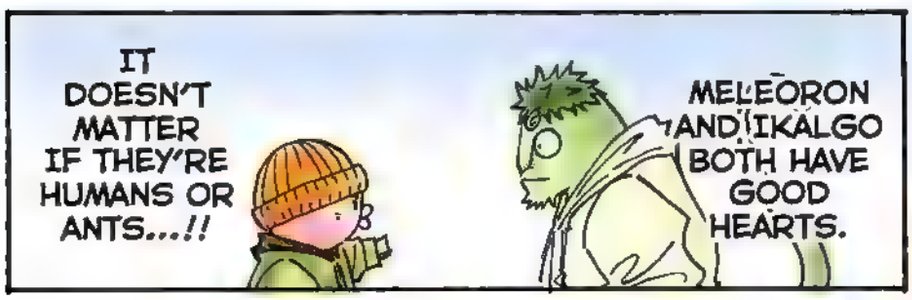
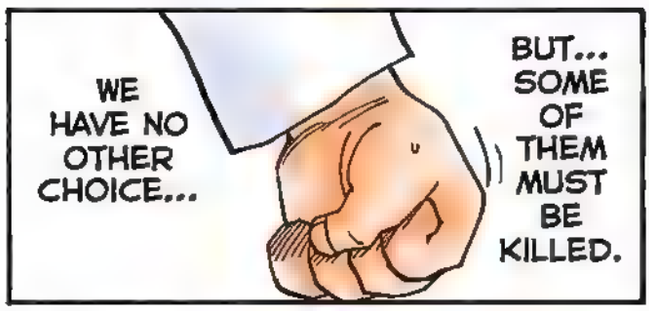
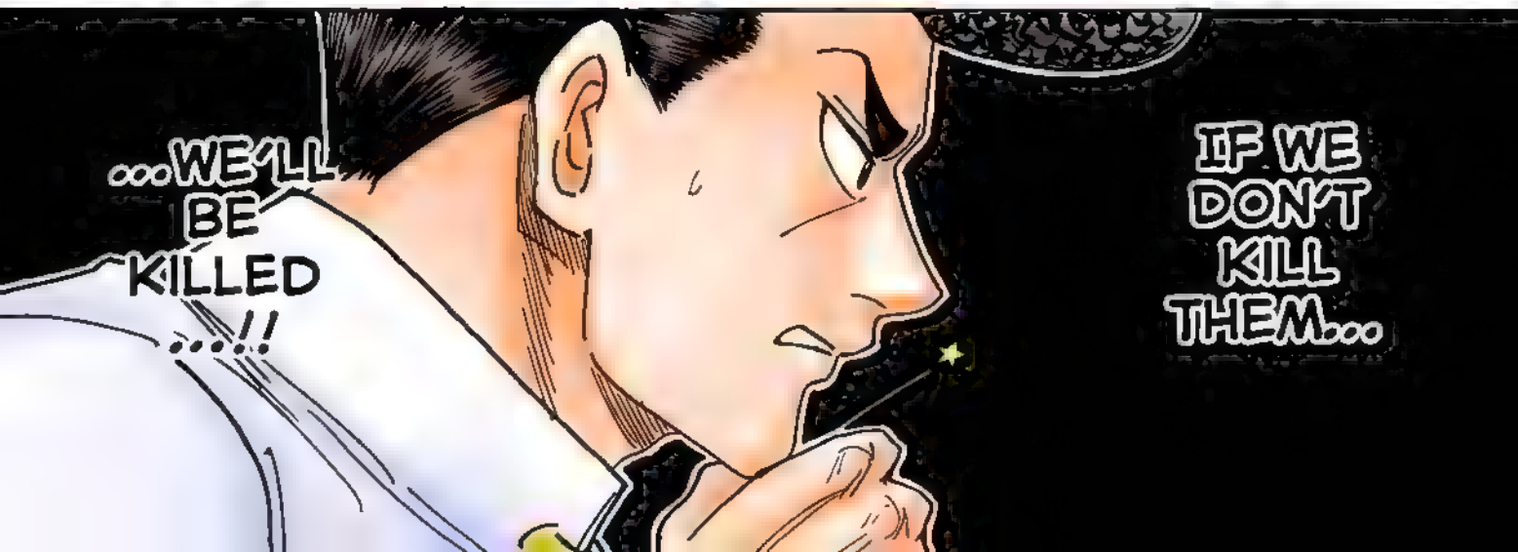
OUT OF EVERYONE, I'M THE ONE SUFFERING FROM THE MOST ANXIETY.
NO... I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OTHERS...!!


IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THEY'RE HUMANS OR ANTS...!!
MELEORON AND IKALGO BOTH HAVE GOOD HEARTS.

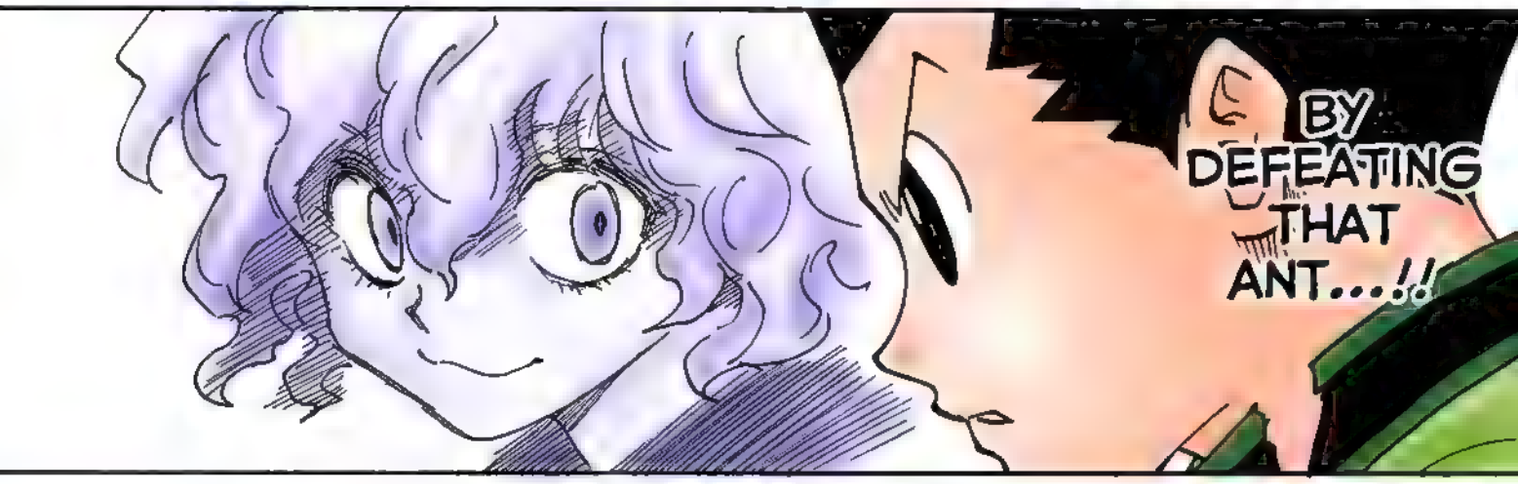

WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE...
BUT... SOME OF THEM MUST BE KILLED.

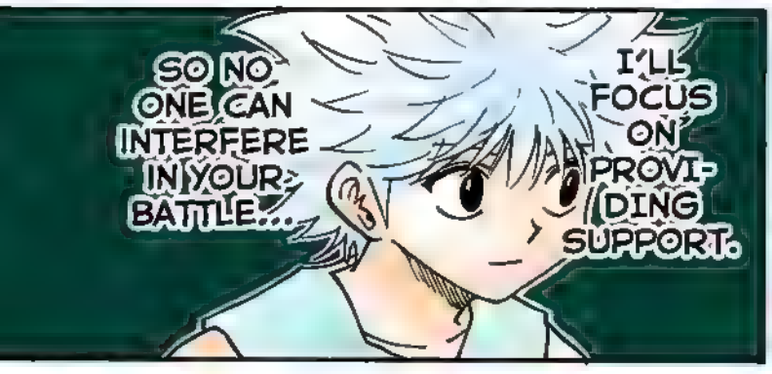
AND HOPEFULLY, THE KING ALSO HAS ONE...!
EVERYONE HAS A HEART!! THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO BELIEVE!

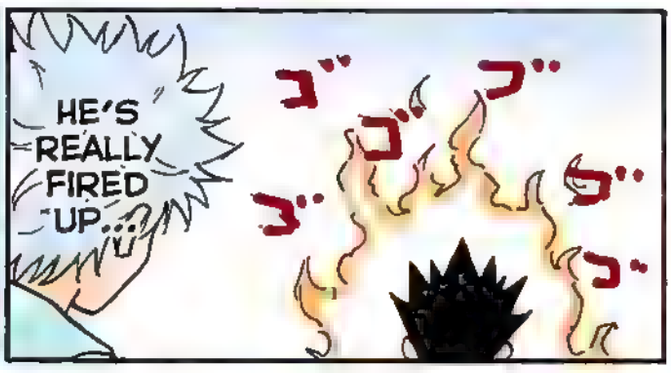

...WE'LL BE KILLED...!!
IF WE DON'T KILL THEM...

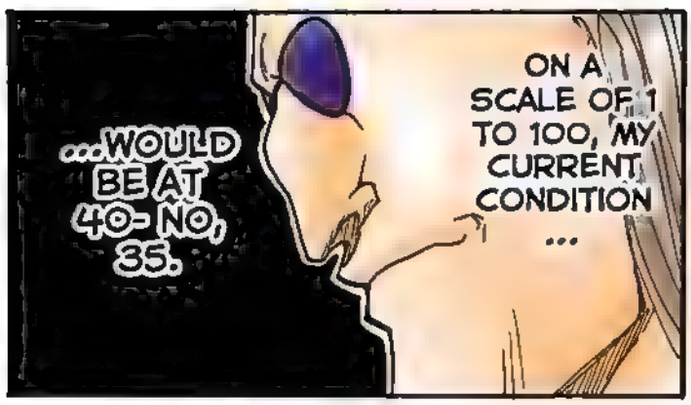
...TO GET YOU BACK TO THE WAY YOU USED TO BE...!!

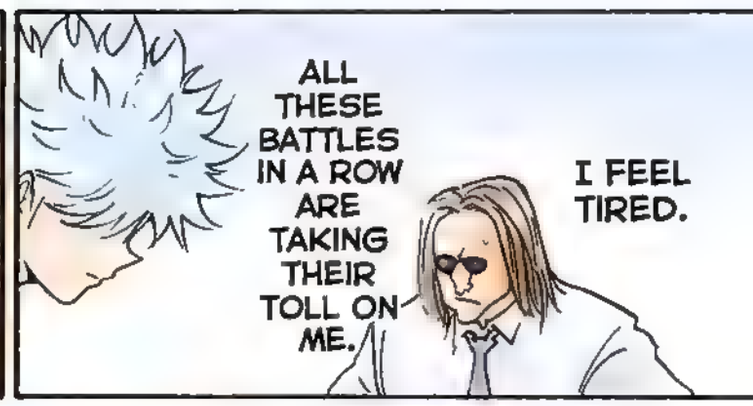
PROMISE...

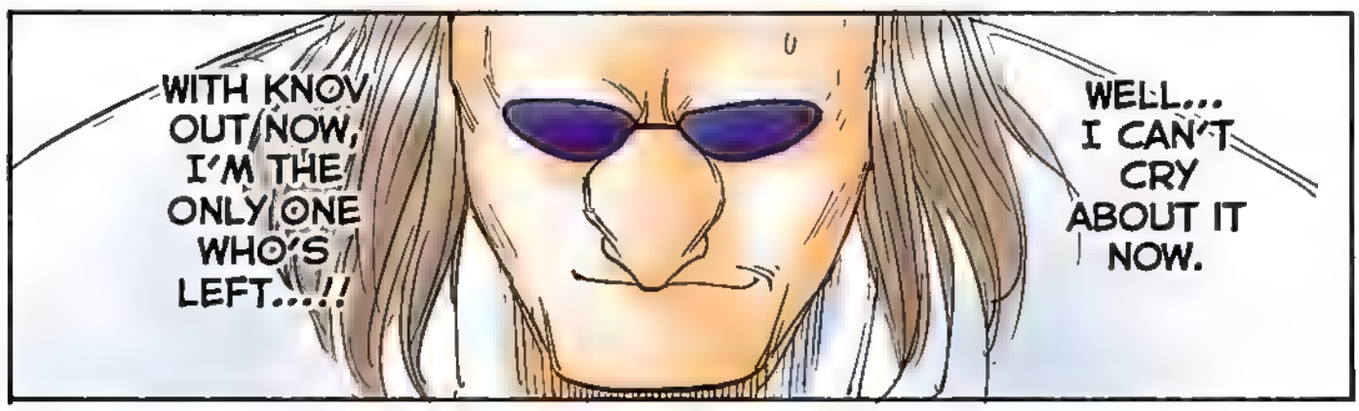


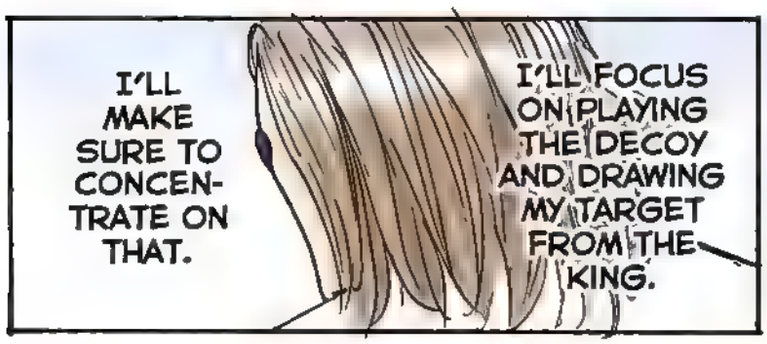


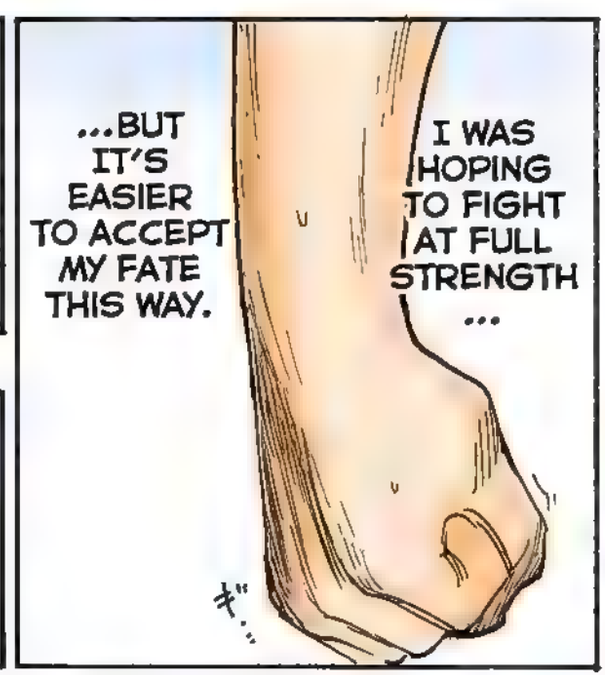


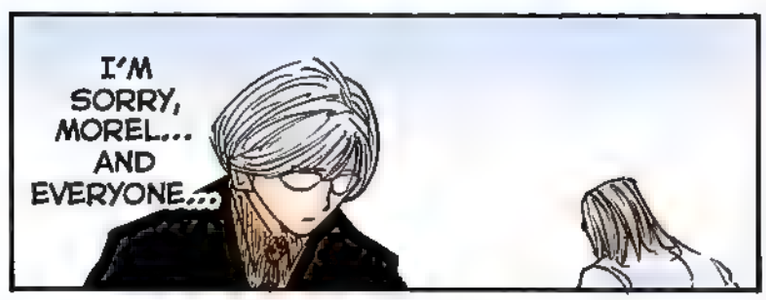

...WOULD BE AT 40- NO, 35.
ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 100, MY CURRENT CONDITION ...


ALL THESE BATTLES IN A ROW ARE TAKING THEIR TOLL ON ME.
I FEEL TIRED.


WITH KNOV OUT NOW, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S LEFT....!!
WELL... I CAN'T CRY ABOUT IT NOW.


I'LL MAKE SURE TO CONCEN-TRATE ON THAT.
I'LL FOCUS ON PLAYING THE DECOY AND DRAWING MY TARGET FROM THE KING.


...BUT IT'S EASIER TO ACCEPT MY FATE THIS WAY.
I WAS HOPING TO FIGHT AT FULL STRENGTH ...


I'M SORRY, MOREL... AND EVERYONE...

I'LL GO CHECK ON THE PALACE.
BUT I CAN'T...
BRING MYSELF TO GO...!!

SO TWO MINUTES IS THE LONGEST I CAN HOLD MY BREATH...
GIVEN HOW TENSE I'LL BE INSIDE, MY LIMIT WILL PROBABLY BE, AT MOST, HALF THAT.

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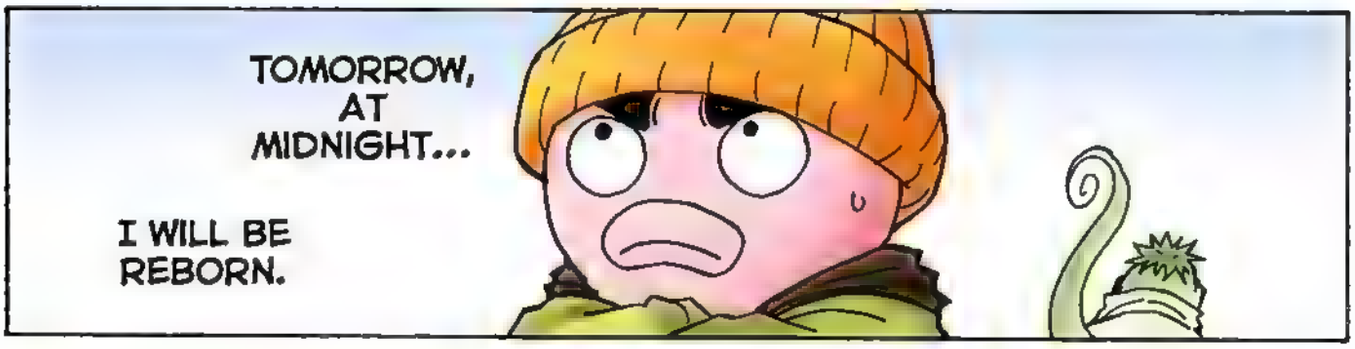
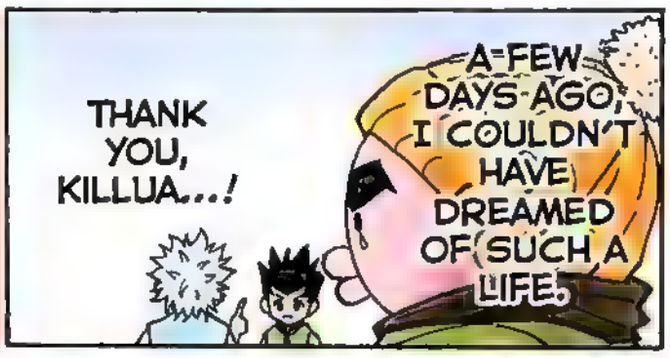
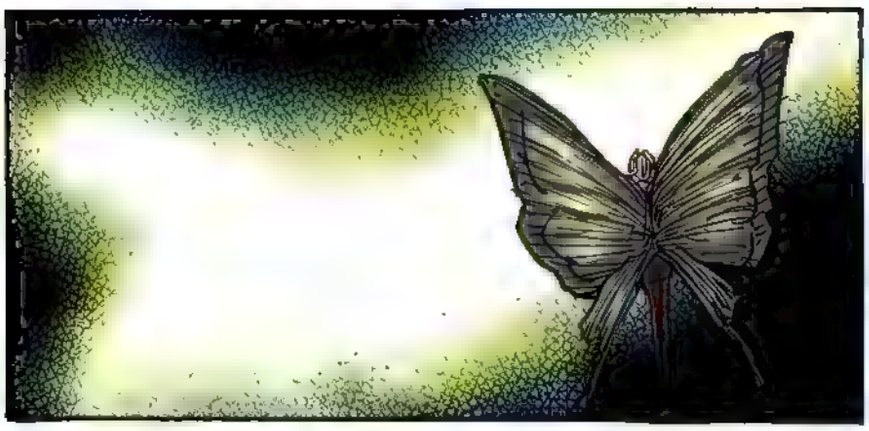
PHEW

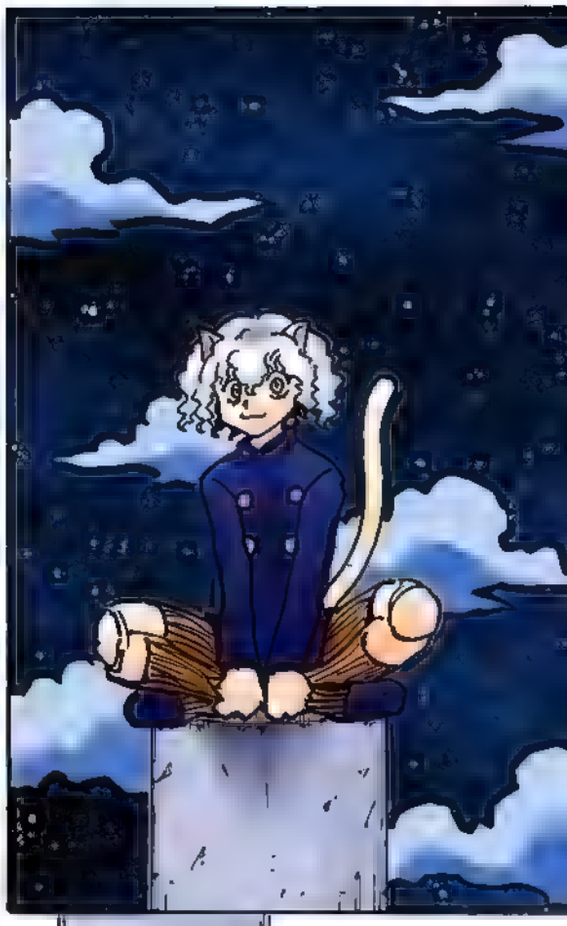
ONE MINUTE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME!
THAT SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH...

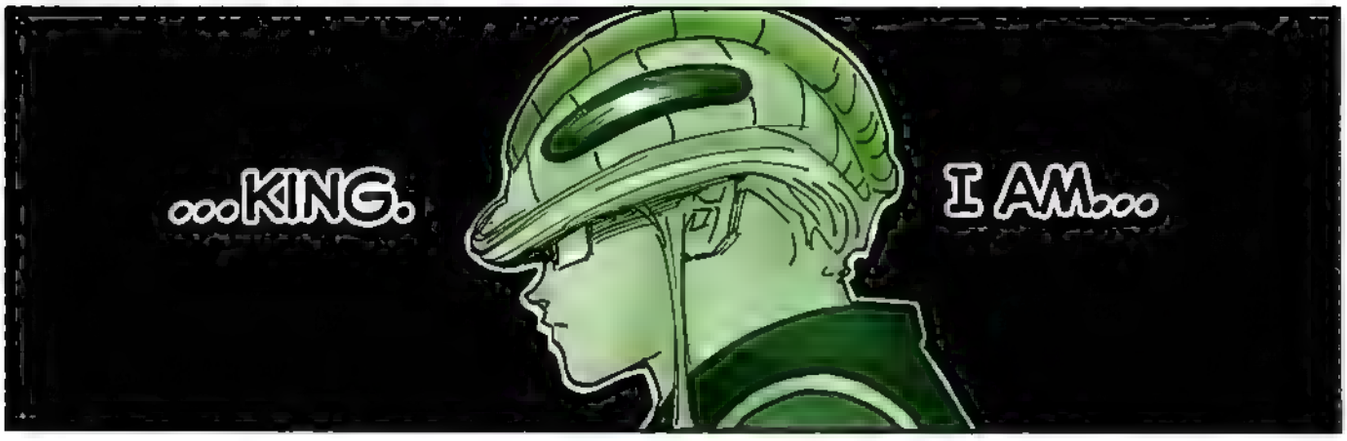

TOMORROW, AT MIDNIGHT...
I WILL BE REBORN.

TOMORROW WILL BE MY BIRTHDAY...!!
I PROMISE TO CARRY OUT MY MISSION FOR YOU...!!

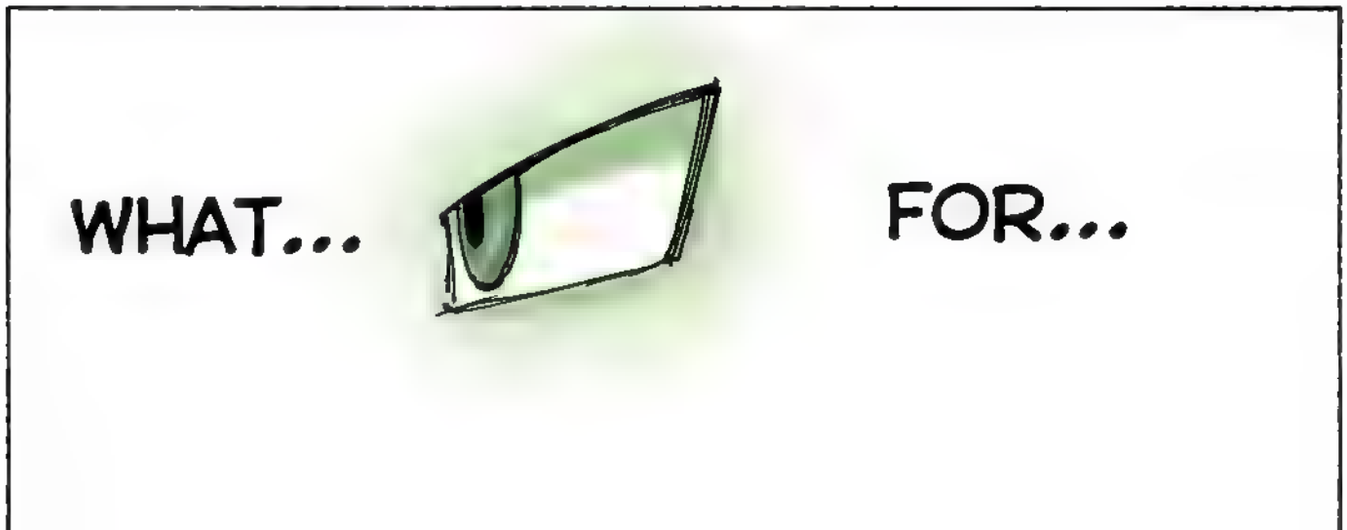

THANK YOU, KILLUA...!
A FEW DAYS AGO, I COULDN'T HAVE DREAMED OF SUCH A LIFE.






...KING.
I AM...

...AM I REALLY...?
BUT WHO...


WHAT...
FOR...

...WAS I BORN FOR....?

REASON...

TIME'S UP.
LET'S GO.
PALM...
ドクン
ドクン
ドクン
ズ…
ズ…

ドクン
ドクン
ドクン
ドクン

...UNTIL WE STRIKE...!!

10 MORE MINUTES REMAIN...

Digital color version
HUNTER×HUNTER
Volume 24

Yoshihiro Togashi
®POT (Yoshihiro Togashi) 2005, 2006

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This work is based on the author's original drawing in addition to the author's color original drawing. This is a special edition version that was digitally colored by Shueisha.

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YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

My assistant made this... it's a double-layered sticker. The top layer is just the fishing rod, so if you peel it off, it's just Gon punching! That's so Awesome...!!

●週刊少年ジャンプ・H17年34号、36・37合併号～39号、41号、42号、45号、46号、50号、H18年8号～11号掲載分収録

背表紙・カバー折り返し

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JUMP COMICS

HUNTER × HUNTER

NO.24▶1ー④

Yoshihiro Togashi

本体・表紙

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